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Rebecca Kukla

Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy

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Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy

This volume explores the relationship between Kant's aesthetic theory and his critical epistemology as articulated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. The essays, written for this volume, revise our understanding of core elements of Kant's epistemology, such as his notions of discursive understanding, experience, and objective judgment. They also demonstrate a rich grasp of Kant's critical epistemology that enables a deeper understanding of his aesthetics. Collectively, the essays reveal that Kant's critical project, and the dialectics of aesthetics and cognition within it, are still relevant to contemporary debates in epistemology, philosophy of mind, and the nature of experience and objectivity. The book also yields important lessons about the ineliminable yet problematic place of imagination, sensibility, and aesthetic experience in perception and cognition.

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Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy

Edited by
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For André Kukla, Philosopher-King

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Notes on Contributors

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Introduction

Placing the Aesthetic in Kant's Critical Epistemology

Rebecca Kukla

The primary thesis of this book, taken as a whole, is that we cannot properly understand Kant's critical epistemological program or his account of empirical cognition without also understanding his account of aesthetic judgment, imagination, and sensibility (articulated primarily in his *Critique of the Power of Judgment* but showing up in bits and pieces in the *Critique of Pure Reason*).¹ And yet, the book also demonstrates that placing the aesthetic within Kant's cognitive theory is a difficult task that often risks challenging that theory from within. Between them, the eleven original essays in this volume show that on the one hand, careful attention to Kant's aesthetics revises and illuminates our entrenched understandings of core elements of Kant's critical epistemology, such as his notions of discursive understanding, experience, and determinative judgment, while on the other hand, a rich grasp of Kant's whole critical project is necessary for making sense of his aesthetic theory.

For most of the twentieth century, Kant's aesthetic theory was marginalized by analytic philosophers, who systematically privileged epistemology and (to a lesser extent) ethics as the core philosophical subdisciplines, and who did not see aesthetics as substantially relevant to these subdisciplines. Kant's third *Critique* received vastly less scholarly attention than the first two, and the little commentary that it did receive was insulated from the rest of the corpus of Kant scholarship. The *Critique of the Power of*

¹ Kant discusses aesthetics in other places, particularly his precritical essay *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (2004), but the focus of this volume is specifically on Kant's critical philosophy and the place of the aesthetic within it.

Judgment was assumed by the majority of Anglo-American philosophers to be a lesser work, a dated romantic treatise on art that was easily separable from the first two critiques. Those who did turn their attention to the work were mostly dedicated philosophers of art, who also did not read the book as integral to Kant's critical epistemology, but rather as a self-contained account of beauty, artistic genius, the standards of good art, or (at most) the connection between aesthetic taste and moral character.² Meanwhile, continental philosophers and literary theorists such as Paul de Man and Jean-François Lyotard took the third *Critique* very seriously indeed, but mostly without much interest in engaging the epistemological concerns of Anglo-American philosophy.³

This sequestering of the third *Critique* was especially surprising and unpromising, in retrospect, given Kant's own scrupulous and extensive efforts to tie his three *Critiques* tightly together into a single architectonic whole. All three critiques share a great deal of analytical structure and conceptual machinery. Each is organized into an 'analytic' and a 'dialectic', each analyzes the form of judgments according to the same moments (quantity, quality, relation, modality), derived from the table of judgments introduced in the first *Critique*, each contains a transcendental deduction of the validity of the form of judgment that it takes as its topic, and so forth. Furthermore, Kant repeatedly insists that the three critiques are meant to form a comprehensive whole, with each book explicating how its distinctive form of judgment can function legitimately within the transcendental idealist metaphysics and critical epistemology that he lays out in the Preface and the Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Under the circumstances, it seems that the burden of proof would lie firmly on Kant's commentators to show that the third *Critique* was a separable or ignorable document and *not* an integral part of the critical project. But it remains the case that until fairly recently, only two philosophers really took the purported fundamental unity of the critical project absolutely seriously, namely, Martin Heidegger and Gilles Deleuze,⁴ and neither of them came from this side of the Atlantic. Only, it seems, a bias against aesthetics as a serious philosophical topic can explain why so many scholars were willing to assume this separability in advance of any serious attention to the text.

² For example, see the contents of Cohen and Guyer's classic collection of essays on Kant's aesthetics (1982).

³ See, for instance, de Man (1990) and Lyotard (1994), and also Bernstein (1992).

⁴ See Heidegger (1990) and Deleuze (1990).

But scholarship on the third *Critique* and on Kant's theory of judgment in general, understood to include aesthetic judgment, has undergone a renaissance over the past few decades, and over the past fifteen years in particular. The prominence of the third *Critique* in the Anglo-American world, as well as interest in its significance beyond philosophy of art, began an important upswing in the 1970s with the publication of a few influential works such as Donald Crawford's *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (1974), Theodore Uehling's *The Notion of Form in Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (1971), Eva Schaper's *Studies in Kant's Aesthetics* (1979), and the first edition of Paul Guyer's *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (1979, second revised edition 1997). The year 1990 saw the publication of Hannah Ginsborg's doctoral dissertation, *The Role of Taste in Kant's Theory of Cognition*, and Rudolf Makkreel's *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Both works were specifically designed to show the systematic connections between Kant's aesthetic theory and his epistemology and theory of cognition, and both chipped away at the counterproductive impasse between continental and analytic philosophy, availing themselves of the insights and texts of each. From 1990 on, philosophical attention turned quickly and vigorously to this set of systematic connections, and Kant's aesthetic theory became a topic of direct interest to many epistemologists. There quickly followed a blossoming of philosophical interest in the third *Critique*, with an eye to its epistemological and cognitive dimensions and its contribution to the critical project as a whole, as well as a fresh rereading of the first *Critique*, with an eye to the place it assigns to the aesthetic functions of sensibility and imagination in empirical cognition. Several classic contributions to this exploration have already emerged, such as Henry E. Allison's *Kant's Theory of Taste* (2001)⁵ and Béatrice Longuenesse's *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (1998).⁶

In a complementary development, several philosophers, prominently including John McDowell, have recently followed Wilfrid Sellars in looking to Kant's account of sensibility and its relationship to the discursive understanding as a rich source for illuminating contemporary epistemological debates. According to McDowell, the Kantian critical apparatus is the source of a set of dualisms (between concepts and intuitions,

⁵ This book completed Allison's trio of works on the three branches of the critical philosophy, interpreted as a systematic whole, the first two being *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* (1983) and *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (1990).

⁶ Longuenesse's book was released first in French in 1993 as *Kant et le Pouvoir de Juger*.

receptivity and spontaneity, sensibility and understanding) out of which spring some of the deepest problems in contemporary epistemology, such as how the preconceptualized deliverances of sensibility could ground conceptual judgment and inference. At the same time, Sellars and McDowell argue, careful attention to Kantian sensibility and imagination also provides resources for overcoming these dualisms and dissolving these problems.⁷

In light of the dazzling reinvigoration of our engagement with both the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, it is high time that the voices of the major participants in this renaissance be collected in one volume; this is what I have aimed to do here. I have included essays by a couple of the most prominent and established living Kant scholars, both of whom have long been dedicated to treating the critical philosophy as a whole (Paul Guyer and Henry Allison), scholars who initiated and gave form to the renaissance in Kant scholarship I have just described (Rudolf Makkreel, Hannah Ginsborg, Béatrice Longuenesse); emerging Kant scholars who were trained in a new climate in which the third *Critique* was taken to be a key philosophical text, the critical philosophy was treated as a unified endeavor, and the distinction between analytic and continental philosophy had begun to break down (Melissa Zinkin, Kirk Pillow); and philosophers with established reputations in epistemology, phenomenology, and the history of philosophy who are finding new reasons to turn to Kant in light of recent work on Kantian sensibility and aesthetic theory (Mark Okrent, Richard Manning, John McCumber).

1. CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE COPERNICAN TURN: AN OVERVIEW

Kant's critical epistemological project, writ large, was to overcome the twin threats of humiliating skepticism and hubristic dogmatism. He wished to find a secure ground for our judgments, which would guarantee that they were both accountable to an empirical world and able to grasp and make sense of that world. In order to establish such security, Kant insisted on relinquishing the dream of total epistemic mastery in order to gain genuine mastery over a carefully limited and circumscribed

⁷ See Sellars (1992), McDowell (1994), and especially McDowell (1998). See also Norris (2000), MacBeth (2000), and in particular Manning, this volume.

domain. Specifically, he argued that we had to give up the dream of understanding things as they are in themselves, unconditioned by our own epistemic activities ('noumena') so as to gain the right kind of secure grasp of things as they are conditioned by our encounter with them ('phenomena').

Kant sought to bring the domain of phenomena – the empirical objects of possible experience – under the mastery of the understanding by way of his famous "Copernican turn," wherein we begin from the assumption that our understanding plays a constitutive role in producing and regulating the empirical order. Whereas "up to now it ha[d] been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects," he hoped to

get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition. . . . This would be just like the first thoughts of Copernicus, who, when he did not make good progress in the explanation of the celestial motions if he assumed that the entire celestial host revolves around the observer, tried to see if he might not have greater success if he made the observer revolve and left the stars at rest.⁸

The Copernican turn is supposed to take the humiliating sting out of our epistemic finitude by carving out a safe and delineable domain within which the world can be counted upon to be intrinsically comprehensible, since the principles and conditions of our cognitive faculties are the constitutive conditions governing the objects we seek to understand.

Our cognitive faculties can remain secure in their hegemony only when they remain cloistered within their carefully controlled and charted territory. The "land of the understanding"

is an island, and enclosed in unalterable boundaries by nature itself. It is the land of truth (a charming name), surrounded by a broad and stormy ocean, the true seat of illusion, where many a fog bank and rapidly melting iceberg pretend to be new lands and, ceaselessly deceiving with empty hopes the voyager looking around for new discoveries, entwine him in adventures from which he can never escape and yet also never bring to an end. (B294–5)

Rather than venture off our island, we must be "satisfied with what it contains out of necessity" (ibid.). By carefully containing our inquiries within this domain, we could, in a limited way, become masters rather than

⁸ *Critique of Pure Reason* Bxvi. Henceforth in this volume, references to the *Critique of Pure Reason* shall be given simply by their pagination in the A and B editions. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are from the Guyer and Wood edition (1997).

subjects in our epistemic partnership with the empirical world.⁹ Kant's language of the encounter between human cognition and the objective world is thoroughly inflected with legislative rhetoric. His guiding epistemological concern is that the understanding remain legitimately vested with the power to lay down laws that nature must follow while not overstepping the boundaries of its authority. He describes the three Critiques themselves as playing a 'policing' role (*CPR* Bxxv); they enable our cognitive faculties to master their epistemic domain by guarding and enforcing its boundaries. Human cognition purportedly enjoys safe haven on the island of truth because here, objects are under *our* rule. Instead of being "instructed by nature like a pupil," dependent on our teacher's contingent gifts of knowledge, our relation to nature on the island would be that of "an appointed judge, who compels witnesses to answer the questions he puts to them" (Bxiii). Human cognition does not create empirical nature in its particularity, but it does give it the law. "Reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own. . . . It must not allow itself to be kept, as it were, in nature's lead strings, but must itself show the way" (*ibid.*).

The project of critical epistemology, then, is the twofold task of delineating the boundaries of the domain of proper inquiry and determining the principles of proper judgment with respect to the phenomena within this domain. Kant's three critical works are intended to carry out this project with respect to pure theoretical judgment, practical judgment, and aesthetic and teleological judgment,¹⁰ respectively. Furthermore, the very title of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* gives it a presumptive primacy over the other two: While the *Critique of Pure Reason* introduces the critical project, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* purports to complete it.

Although our cognitive faculties will always help constitute the order they encounter, Kant insisted upon the ratification of an empirical realist epistemology and metaphysics in which, as Richard Manning puts it in this volume, our judgments "amount to commitments directed toward objects in a world that is not of our making, . . . answerable for their correctness to the way that those objects are." The Copernican turn, successfully executed, would guarantee that our cognitive faculties are suited to the task

⁹ For an exploration of this dream of epistemic mastery contained within the boundaries of a circumscribed 'island' and its place in the eighteenth century imaginary, see Kukla (2005).

¹⁰ Both aesthetic judgment and teleological judgment are species of *reflective judgment*, of which more later.

of grasping and making sense of empirical objects, but in turning we risk losing the answerability of cognition to these objects. For once we begin, as the critical method asks us to do, with the *subjective conditions of cognition* and the constitutive influence of our cognitive faculties, we must immediately ask why we should believe that these subjective conditions reflect the real character of empirical objects, as opposed to merely our representations of these objects. How, if we constitutively contribute to the objects we experience, do we avoid descending into empirical idealism and concluding that our inquiries merely hold up a mirror that fails to be accountable to an independent world? Or, as Kant puts the problem, how is it that “*subjective conditions of thinking* should have *objective validity*” (A89/B122)? Having foreclosed the problem of successful access to the objects of inquiry through the Copernican turn, this problem of objective validity then becomes the driving question of the critical epistemology as a whole, and of the Transcendental Deduction of the first *Critique* in particular.

2. DISCURSIVITY AND SENSIBILITY

Kant’s model of cognitive judgment, as he introduces it in the first *Critique*, is quite simple, and he uses this initial model to help narrow and focus the problem of objective validity that it will purportedly be the task of the Transcendental Deduction to solve. According to this familiar model, our central cognitive tool for grasping the world in judgment is the understanding. The understanding is *discursive*, which is to say that it consists of a faculty of general concepts that function as rules for categorizing particulars. Judgment involves subsuming particulars under such general concepts, and hence every judgment has the form of a proposition, with the table of judgments giving the possible logical forms of such propositions (A70/B95). The understanding can *determine* particulars using concepts it already possesses, or it can *reflect* upon particulars, and their similarities and differences, in order to form a new concept. The faculty of understanding has no goals or guiding principles of its own, according to Kant; rather, it is the tool used by *reason*, which seeks a systematic, nomological grasp of the empirical world. Reason builds such a systematic grasp (though never completes it) through *determinative judgment*, which subsumes particulars under concepts, and through *reflective judgment*, which creatively goes beyond the mere processing of experience in order to form hypotheses, find new connections, and otherwise tie experience together systematically.

The understanding is a spontaneous faculty: It does not collect information about the world but rather operates, through reflection and determination, on what is delivered to it. The Kantian *aesthetic*, properly speaking, is just that which we receive through our sensuous encounter with the world, which can then (normally) be delivered to the understanding for processing in discursive judgment. Our aesthetic encounter with the world is that provided by our faculty of *sensibility*, which, unlike the understanding, is a *receptive* faculty. Without such a receptive faculty and its deliverances, our understanding would make no contact with the world and would have nothing to operate upon – as Kant notoriously puts it, without the content provided by sensibility, concepts are “empty” (A51/B75). As presented at the beginning of the first *Critique*, the faculty of sensibility is a quite neat and simple dualistic complement to the faculty of concepts: Where the latter is spontaneous, the faculty of sensibility is purely receptive, and what it receives are *intuitions*, which are (equally notoriously) “blind” without concepts (ibid.). It is only through empirical judgment, which applies concepts to intuition, that we have *experience* – which has discursive structure, can ground inference, and so forth – at all. Hence the aesthetic dimension of experience, on this view, is just that which belongs to receptive sensibility. True to this initial stark division of labor, the only explicit discussion of the aesthetic in the first *Critique* is the Transcendental Aesthetic, which argues for the transcendental, a priori status of space and time as the forms of intuition – that is, the aesthetic form in which sensibility is received by our cognitive faculties. That intuition has such a priori forms makes it clear that even the deliverances of sensibility are *conditioned* by our cognitive faculties, but the faculty of sensibility does not (here) actively *form* intuition – it just *receives* intuition in a certain form.

The task of the Transcendental Deduction, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is to discharge the initial assumption of the possibility of the Copernican turn. The Deduction – whose job is nothing less than the ratification of the objectivity of our cognition – purports to show that our judgments succeed in being accountable to the empirical world, in virtue of this world in turn being transcendently required to conform to the principles of our discursive understanding. The Deduction has a double thrust. It needs to show that the sensuous deliverances of intuition will not outrun the ability of the understanding to order these deliverances by bringing them under general concepts, and it needs to show that our properly formed discursive judgments neither distort nor misrepresent the phenomena they seek to grasp. According to Kant, intuitions – including space and

time as the pure aesthetic forms of intuition – need no deduction. Rather, they “necessarily relate to objects” because of their receptive character. Furthermore, he claims, our use of empirical concepts does not need an a priori deduction, since these concepts are derived from the deliverances of sensibility. Hence, he concludes, what is needed is only a transcendental deduction of the legitimacy of the pure, a priori categories of the understanding, which “do not represent to us the conditions under which objects are given in intuition” (A89/B122).

3. THE EVOLVING AUTONOMY OF THE AESTHETIC

Notice that if we take this dualistic model seriously, then strictly speaking there can be no such thing as either ‘pure aesthetic experience’ or ‘pure aesthetic judgment,’ since the aesthetic is that which is passively received in intuition and not yet synthesized by the understanding, as Kant says it must be in order to constitute experience. The story of how and why the Kantian aesthetic becomes so much more than it initially appears to be is the story that frames this book.

The role of the aesthetic in cognition and judgment starts to become more complex almost immediately after Kant dismisses it as a problem at the beginning of the Deduction. Quite unexpectedly, given Kant’s reiteration of his two-faculty approach at the start of this section, in it Kant abruptly introduces what seems to be a whole new cognitive faculty; the *imagination*, which is capable of a whole new kind of synthesis, which Kant calls the *figurative synthesis* of the manifold of intuition. Until this point in the text, Kant’s discussion of synthetic activity concerned the synthesis *of intuition in understanding*. However, figurative synthesis is prediscursive, and its job is to display order and unity *at the level of the sensible particular* in preparation for its subsumption under discursive concepts. Although Kant claims that the imagination “belongs to sensibility,” he also portrays it as a kind of *activity* and hence not merely receptive:

This synthesis of the manifold of sensible intuition, which is possible and necessary a priori, may be entitled figurative synthesis, to distinguish it from the synthesis which is . . . entitled synthesis of the understanding. . . . The figurative synthesis . . . must, in order to be distinguished from the merely intellectual combination, be called the *transcendental synthesis of the imagination*. (B151)

The introduction of imagination and its figurative synthesis is already a suspicious departure from the neat dualism of active understanding and passive sensibility, but in the B version of the Deduction, Kant tries to keep

this new faculty from posing any real challenge to the mastery and regulatory power of the understanding by claiming that though imagination “belongs to sensibility,” and though figurative synthesis is prediscursive, it is “an action of the understanding on sensibility” (B152). Thus it appears here that the imagination operates as a servant of the understanding, readying intuition for understanding’s rule *according to the latter’s own, discursive principles*.

Hence it is a surprise when, right after the Deduction is complete and the objective validity of our concepts is supposedly secure, we find out that the job of making perspicuous which conceptual rules apply to objects cannot possibly be governed by discursive general rules without introducing a hopeless regress:

General logic contains no precepts at all for the power of judgment, and moreover cannot contain them. . . . If it wanted to show generally how one ought to subsume under [formal] rules, . . . this could not happen except once again through a rule. But just because this is a rule, it would demand another instruction for the power of judgment, and so it becomes clear that although the understanding is certainly capable of being instructed and equipped through rules, the power of judgment is a special talent that cannot be taught but only practiced. (A133/B172)

This ‘rules regress,’ which foreshadows Wittgenstein’s formulation of it in the *Philosophical Investigations*, indicates that our general capacity to ‘see’ which concepts apply to a particular cannot itself be governed by conceptual rules. Judgment requires that the imagination guide the understanding by making perspicuous, through figurative synthesis, a type of order that the understanding can articulate. This in turn requires a ‘peculiar talent’ for grasping the particular at the aesthetic level of sensibility. The call for this special guiding function of the imagination initiates Kant’s chapter on the “Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding” (or just the Schematism), whose brief eleven pages Heidegger claims “constitute the central core of the whole [critical project].”¹¹ Schematization is the process by which the imagination gathers intuition and produces schemata that somehow *show the understanding, from within sensibility*, how the presentations of sensibility can be categorized and comprehended under general concepts. And again, schematization cannot be governed by discursive rules, for its function is precisely to enable the application of such rules. In other words, however schematization is governed, this activity is *aesthetic* rather than discursive – a fact marked not only by Kant’s explicit argument here about the limits of the understanding, but also

¹¹ Heidegger (1990), 60.

by his description of schematization as an “art” (A141/B180–1). Hence at this stage, there is already much more activity going on at the level of aesthetic sensibility than his initial model indicated. Likewise imagination, while still here functioning in the *service* of the understanding and hence directed by its goals, has gained more *autonomy* than it had in the Deduction, where figurative synthesis was still described as an “action of the understanding.”¹² Figurative synthesis must now somehow work *in harmony* with the understanding, but not directly governed by its rules. Kant immediately drops the issue of how such harmony might work in the first *Critique*, but it reemerges as a central theme (though in the context of his analysis of aesthetic rather than determinative judgment) in the third *Critique*.

At least two initial features of the third *Critique* make it clear that the function Kant assigns to sensibility in our cognitive apparatus has expanded and strengthened considerably over the course of the critical philosophy.

First, Kant has by now all but dropped the language of intuition, with its original association with mere receptivity; instead, in this work he routinely contrasts the understanding with the much more active imagination, and it is imagination rather than intuition that serves as the focal contribution of the faculty of sensibility. By the time we reach the third *Critique*, there is no longer any question that imagination is no mere function of the understanding. Rather, imagination is capable not only of synthesis, but also of *play*, including, crucially, play that is free from the rule of the understanding. Furthermore, the faculty of imagination now

¹² A crucial and hotly debated issue, which I cannot take up in the confines of an introduction, is whether schematization is required for the application of all concepts or only for the pure categories (see, for instance, Pippin 1976). Kant asserts the latter, and his actual discussion of the schemata concerns all and only the schemata of the categories. Allison (1983) has vigorously defended this limitation and has read the Schematism not as introducing a substantive role for nondiscursive synthesis but, much more harmlessly, as simply giving rules for how to come up with intuitive correlates to pure concepts. But Kant introduces the Analytic of Principles (and thereby the Schematism) with the problem of how to bridge the distance between general concepts and the sensible intuition to which they must be applied, and it is hard to see why this problem and his rules regress should apply only to pure concepts. His opening example of an *unproblematic* case of subsumption is of the *concept* ‘plate’ under the *concept* ‘circle’ (A137/B176), which of course sidesteps the problem of whether the subsumption of a *particular* plate under the concept ‘circle’ (or ‘plate’) requires schematization. On either reading, however, Kant is clear that schematization is an art that does not itself consist of conceptual rule application, and hence on either reading this section accords new autonomy and activity to the imagination.

substantially aids reason in the creative extension of knowledge through reflective judgment.

Second, in the Introduction we learn that in fact – contrary to the explicit motivation and conclusion of the Transcendental Deduction – the conformity of the empirical world with the principles of our understanding is *not* sufficient to guarantee our capacity to grasp it in experience and knowledge. Rather, this capacity is also dependent upon the ability of the imagination to present the sensuous as ordered in the right way to make it suited to our finite discursive abilities, and this ‘fit’ between the sensible world and our cognitive capacities is always contingent. While it is transcendently necessary that we approach the world by assuming the possibility of this fit – this is the much-discussed *principle of the purposiveness of nature* – its actuality is never guaranteed:

This correspondence of nature in the multiplicity of its particular laws with our need to find universality of principles for it must be judged, as far as our insight goes, as contingent but nevertheless indispensable for the needs of our understanding. . . . That the order of nature in its particular laws, although its multiplicity and diversity at least possibly surpass all our power of comprehension, is yet fitted to [the understanding] is, as far as we can see, contingent.¹³

It is through reflective judgment that we find order in the sensuous manifold that is suited to our discursive understanding, and the principles of such judgment belong in the first instance to the imagination. Unless the imagination can find order at the level of sensuous particularity – and its success in doing so is never guaranteed – the understanding will be presented with an unparseable, chaotic mess that cannot be synthesized into coherent experience (*CPJ* 5:182). Such ‘empirical chaos’, as Allison puts it (2001, 37–8), is the complement, at the level of the imagination, to the threat of ‘transcendental chaos’ that is supposed to have been allayed by the Transcendental Deduction in the first *Critique*. Hence here, unlike in the first *Critique*, the figurative synthesis of the imagination does more than implement the discursive principles of the understanding in determinative judgment. Although it still serves the goals of the understanding, the imagination has creative responsibility for directing reflective judgment.

¹³ *Critique of the Power of Judgment* 5:186. Hereafter in this introduction, references to this work will be given in the text as *CPJ* followed by Akademie edition pagination. All translations of this work in this volume are from the Guyer and Matthews edition (Kant 2000) unless otherwise noted.

But once the Introduction has ended and Kant has launched into the *Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment*, imagination is cut even further free from its servitude to the understanding, and the faculty of sensibility once more earns new autonomy and new capacities for activity. In pure aesthetic judgment, the synthetic activity of the imagination at the level of sensible form does not result in determination under concepts and is not governed by the principles of the understanding. Rather, the imagination has the luxury of engaging in ‘free play’ with the understanding, unbound by any determinate concept that would restrict its activity in accordance with a particular discursive rule (*CPJ* 5:217). Even here, the imagination and its principles of activity are not completely independent of the discursive understanding. Kant, rather mysteriously, says that in aesthetic judgments of beauty, the sensible presentations of the imagination are brought under the “faculty of concepts in general” rather than any particular concepts; whatever this means, it is clear that in some sense, harmony between the activity of the imagination and the goals of discursive understanding is essential to aesthetic judgments of beauty. Furthermore, when we judge an object to be beautiful, it is not as though we cease to be able to also judge it to have various determinate properties by subsuming it under concepts.¹⁴ All the same, in aesthetic judgment the imagination is liberated from the rule of the understanding – and hence has enough independent spontaneity to be capable of liberation.

The final major expansion of the autonomy and active power of the faculty of sensibility comes with Kant’s argument, beginning in §20 of the third *Critique*, for the necessary presumption of a shared human *common sense* as a condition for the possibility of aesthetic judgments of taste. Such a *sensus communis*, “which is essentially different from the common understanding that is sometimes also called common sense,” judges by ‘feeling’ rather than concepts (*CPJ* 5:238). Kant argues that we must presume that as sensuous beings with discursive understandings, we share a pure aesthetic sense grounded in this shared cognitive character. Indeed, each judgment of taste necessarily *demand*s agreement from all such sensuous, discursive beings (though of course in practice it will rarely, if ever, receive such universal agreement), holding itself up as universally valid.¹⁵ Whereas regular empirical judgments are accountable to an

¹⁴ Guyer defends this point in detail in “The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited” in this volume.

¹⁵ A great deal of interpretive work has gone into figuring out how to fit this demand for universal agreement into the judgment of taste itself. (See, for instance, several of the

objective shared world, aesthetic judgments cannot have the same kind of accountability because they make no objective claims – they do not apply concepts to objects. But if they are to be anything more than arbitrary subjective pleasures, they need some other tribunal of accountability, and the common aesthetic sense of the human community, presupposed by each judgment of taste, serves as this tribunal. Pure aesthetic judgments are not objectively valid, but they strive for *subjective* universal validity. For the purposes of my current narrative, this is significant because by now, the aesthetic has not only broken free of the regulative clutches of the understanding, but has, as it were, established its own governing court of law – or at least every judgment of taste imputes the possibility of such a tribunal to the community of sensuous, discursive agents.

At least on the face of things, then, the powers, importance, activity, and autonomy of the aesthetic faculty of sensibility spread and strengthen substantially over the course of the critical works. Early in the first *Critique*, Kant insists that intuitions are ‘blind’ and asserts glibly that “appearances can *certainly* be given in intuition without functions of the understanding” (A90/B122, my emphasis), but we have seen that by the middle of the third *Critique*, intuition has all but disappeared from the critical apparatus, and sensibility has become a hotbed of activity, elaborately infused and intertwined with the spontaneous operations of faculty of concepts. There are four basic interpretive responses to this shift:

1. One can simply ignore it, maintaining Kant’s original dualism of receptive intuition and spontaneous understanding, dismissing the Schematism as a bizarre and relatively dispensable interlude in the first

essays in this volume, including the exchange between Paul Guyer and Henry Allison, as well as the essays by Béatrice Longuenesse and Rudolf Makkreel, among others.) One question is whether the judgment of universal communicability is somehow part of, or instead comes after, the free, harmonious play of the faculties; Guyer has tenaciously defended the second view, and others, including Hannah Ginsborg, have defended versions of the first. Another question concerns the normative status of this demand – is it more like an expectation of agreement or a prescriptive request for agreement? I think that considerable confusion has arisen because commentators have tried to somehow fit the demand for universality, whatever its normative voice, into the *content* of the judgment of taste. I suggest that it is more helpful to think of this demand as a feature of the *performative force* of the judgment: The judgment is the harmonious play of the faculties, but the *pragmatic function* of this judgment is not to *assert* anything, including anything about universal agreement, but rather to *call for* such agreement. The judgment of taste, on this reading, is not quasi-declarative in its form, but rather has a different pragmatic structure altogether. Unfortunately, this introduction is not the place for me to develop and defend such a substantive thesis. For a related discussion, see Kukla and Lance (forthcoming).

Critique, and denying that the third *Critique* forms an integral part of the critical philosophy. A major premise of this book, of course, is that this first option is not attractive. However, mainstream analytic works on Kant's critical epistemology used to take this approach routinely.¹⁶

2. One can acknowledge that the role of the aesthetic in judgment is important, and that sensibility must be more than mere nonconceptual receptivity, while insisting that Kant, when read carefully and charitably, can be seen to have had a consistent account of this sort all along, and likewise denying that Kant ever championed a merely receptive faculty of sensibility. John McDowell is a paradigmatic example of someone adopting this strategy. In "Having the World in View: Kant, Sellars and Intentionality," McDowell argues in detail that Kantian intuitions themselves are always "shapings of sensory consciousness by the understanding" (1998, 462) and that "the idea that perception involves a flow of conceptual representations guided by manifolds of 'sheer receptivity' is not Kantian *at all*" (ibid., 452, my emphasis). Béatrice Longuenesse is another example of a scholar who has worked to read aesthetic activity back into Kant's original account of determinative judgment while maintaining the consistency of his overall account.¹⁷

3. One can read the critical corpus biographically, arguing that Kant's views indeed changed and developed over time as he became committed to a larger and more active role for the aesthetic in cognition. On this view, Kant's final position is more compelling and more satisfying than his initial dualistic picture and its impoverished conception of aesthetic sensibility. Makkreel (1990) and Förster (2000) have defended such readings.

4. Finally, one can argue that as the role and the activity of the faculty of sensibility slowly expand over the course of the critical corpus, the aesthetic comes to pose a serious challenge to the overall critical project, either demanding its serious retroactive revision or importantly undermining some of its key goals and tenets. Heidegger, for example, insisted that the imagination shows up in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as an inassimilable 'rogue faculty' that challenges Kant's initially clean dichotomy between spontaneous understanding and receptive intuition, and he claims that if Kant had followed his own line of argument, he would have been required to rethink the critical project at its very core, scrapping some of its central tenets such as the a priori necessity and security of the

¹⁶ See, for instance, Strawson (1966) and Bennett (1966).

¹⁷ See especially Longuenesse (1998).

categories. Several of the essays in this volume argue that the emergence of the aesthetic and its increasing autonomy and spontaneity pose such pressures – in particular the essays by Kirk Pillow, who argues that we need to retroactively reinterpret Kant’s original model of the discursive understanding; Richard Manning, who argues that McDowell cannot get away with introducing conceptual activity into the heart of sensible intuition while still allowing Kant to be true to his original critical aspirations; and John McCumber, who argues that the account of aesthetic judgment in the third *Critique* actually reveals the need to deconstruct and transcend the very core of the critical project.

4. CONTINGENCY, MASTERY, SUPPRESSION

Regardless of whether we decide, upon careful reading and reflection, to settle on some version of interpretive option 2, 3 or 4 above, it is worth seeing why the picture of the aesthetic that emerges slowly over the course of the critical writings should pose at least a *prima facie* challenge for the project of critical epistemology, as Kant laid it out at the start of the first *Critique*.

Recall that in a crucial sense, the *mastery* of the understanding over its proper, circumscribed domain was the driving goal of the critical epistemology. We saw Kant employ several techniques with which to ensure this mastery. One was the restriction of our domain of inquiry to the ‘island of truth’ – that is, the realm of phenomena, or objects of possible experience. Kant takes himself, by the end of the Transcendental Analytic, to have “carefully inspected each part of [this island, and] also surveyed and determined the place for each thing in it” (B294). Another was the completion of the Transcendental Deduction, designed to show that our cognitive faculties were guaranteed to be adequate for secure mastery of this restricted domain. The Deduction, we saw, was supposed to show *both* that sensible presentations would not outstrip the capacity of the understanding to grasp and order them and, furthermore, that the constitutive work of the understanding would lead to representations with objective validity, thereby ratifying empirical realism as opposed to empirical idealism, and discharging the worry that after the Copernican turn, our representations would no longer be accountable to a real world of empirical objects. But remember also that Kant provided a deduction *only* of the pure concepts of the understanding, on the grounds that it was only there that we needed to worry about objective validity and empirical adequacy. This, in turn, was because the deliverances of receptive

sensibility were supposed to immediately refer to objects without having been produced according to the principles of spontaneous cognition.

Thus, in light of what happens to the aesthetic over the course of Kant's writing, we seem to have a couple of large, interrelated problems on our hands. Once we find out that the activity of schematization is both necessary for the application of concepts, and also an 'art' whose principles cannot be reduced to those of the discursive understanding, we immediately seem to have undermined the results of the just-finished Deduction. Kant tried to portray his introduction of figurative synthesis into the account of judgment as 'safe', during the course of the Deduction, by claiming that it is really nothing but an action of the understanding. But by his own argument in the Schematism, this containment technique appears not to work. The rules regress indicates that the imagination must find order within sensibility without being governed by discursive rules. But now it seems that we should need a transcendental deduction of the legitimacy of the principles of schematization, whatever those are, as well. If we are to be certain both that the imagination is up to the task of finding order in sensuous presentations and that its principles for doing so have objective validity, presumably we need a transcendental deduction of *its* principles, just as we had for the categories of the understanding. Without this, we seem to lose all the security we just gained. However, not only does Kant not offer such a deduction, but he remains determinedly mute with respect to the question of what these principles are in the first place. Notoriously, he claims that judgment is a "peculiar talent" that "cannot be taught" (A133/B172) and that "This schematism of our understanding with regard to appearances and their mere form is a hidden art in the depths of the human soul, whose true operations we can divine from nature and lay unveiled before our eyes only with difficulty" (A141/B180–1). In the third *Critique* he points out that since the principles of imaginative synthesis are by definition not discursive, they cannot be articulated,¹⁸ not to mention having their validity transcendently deduced. But this is no small problem, to say the least.

First, if intuition is *formed* by aesthetic activity by the time it even makes it to the understanding, and if we have no argument for the objective validity of the principles by which it does this, then it's not clear why we should think that this forming is proceeding in a way that is truly accountable to the sensible world, rather than based on merely subjective standards. This problem reemerges in the context of the third *Critique*, in

¹⁸ See in particular *CPJ*§8.

the form of the question of what kind of validity or normative accountability our aesthetic judgments can claim. As we saw, such judgments are not held to the tribunal of objective accountability. Instead, Kant holds them to the standard of *subjective universality*, or universal *communicability*, grounded in a common sense. But while such subjective universality may be a perfectly good standard for pure aesthetic judgment, it doesn't seem to be an appropriate tribunal for cognitive judgments that are about and accountable to the objective world.

Second, the suitability of the sensible world for being synthesized and grasped by our cognitive faculties now becomes contingent rather than transcendently guaranteed. While we may have earned confidence that our concepts will be suited to grasp the figurative products of imaginative synthesis, we have now lost our assurance that the empirical data provided by the world will lend themselves to such figurative synthesis (whose principles remain hidden from us) in the first place. In other words, while we may still be certain that no objects of possible experience will fail to meet the discursive needs of the understanding, there seems to be no guarantee that the sensuous will be graspable in experience as an ordered world of objects at all.

Indeed, this contingency is an explicit theme in the third *Critique*, especially in the Introduction. According to Kant, remember, the fact "that the order of nature in its particular laws, although its multiplicity and diversity at least possibly surpass all our power of comprehension, is yet fitted to it, is, as far as we can see, contingent" (*CPJ* 5:187). And yet, as has been clear since the start of the first *Critique*, such a fit between the order of the sensible and our powers of comprehension is not merely a nice perk, but is rather essential to the possibility of experience in the first place, since experience involves determining the sensuous through our discursive concepts and comprehending nature as a system through reflective judgment. The understanding must depend on the imagination to present it with sensuous order it can grasp, but it cannot *prescribe* aesthetic laws to the sensuous in the way it can prescribe its own purely discursive principles. We thus have to *presuppose* this fit in every empirical encounter, but we cannot count on it. Allison explains, "our understanding proceeds from universals . . . to the particulars that are to be subsumed under them, and since these particulars, as sensibly given, are not themselves products of the act of understanding, it follows that there is an unavoidable element of contingency in the fit between the universal and the particular" (Allison 2001, 38–9).

In fact, the suitability of the sensible world for orderly mastery at the hands of the understanding, whose guarantee seemed so essential in

the first *Critique*, now appears to be a much-needed *gift* from nature, which gives us pleasure precisely because it constitutes the contingent satisfaction of a goal:

Hence we are also *delighted* (strictly speaking, *relieved of a need*) when we encounter such a systematic unity among merely empirical laws, just as if it were a happy accident which happened to favor our aim, even though we necessarily had to assume that there is such a unity, yet without having been able to gain insight into it and to prove it. . . .

To be sure, we no longer detect any noticeable pleasure in the comprehensibility of nature and the unity of its division into genera and species, by means of which alone empirical concepts are possible through which we cognize it in its particular laws; but it must certainly have been there in its time, and only because the most common experience would not be possible without it has it gradually become mixed up with mere cognition and is no longer specially noticed. (*CPJ* 5:184)

The attainment of an aim definitionally involves pleasure, for Kant.¹⁹ Thus, when the imagination manages to grasp nature as purposive and render sensibility harmonious with the needs of the understanding, we feel pleasure necessarily, delighting in the contingent gift that enables us to satisfy our necessary desire to find articulable order in nature. This pleasure in the discovered suitability of nature for comprehension by the discursive understanding – or in other words, pleasure in the purposiveness of nature – is at least closely related to the aesthetic pleasure we take in the beautiful, which concerns the harmony between our sensible presentations and the goals of the understanding in general. However, insofar as this pleasure shows up in the context of empirical judgment, it marks a contingency that would seem to be unacceptable by the standards of the first *Critique* and the goals of critical epistemology. According to Allison, this contingency is “endemic to our discursive understanding” (2001, 48). Remember, after all, that a driving motivation behind the Copernican turn, and the critical project more generally, was to *avoid* letting the possibility of discursive empirical cognition be a contingent gift from the sensible world.

Kant himself raises a serious problem concerning what origin the principles that guide the imagination in its activity could possibly have and how these principles could be legitimate. The principles cannot be arbitrary or merely subjective, for if they were, then the figurative orders they deliver to the understanding would undermine the objective validity of

¹⁹ Although the question of the character of this involvement is a thorny one. Kant takes up this question in §9 of the third *Critique*, which is one of the most difficult and disputed sections of the work.

the judgments they ground. Nor can they be learned from experience, since their employment is supposed to make experience possible in the first place. Finally, they cannot be legislated a priori, for while the understanding has constitutive force with respect to the transcendental conditions of the possibility of experience, the imagination can have no such constitutive force with respect to the actual contingent nature of the sensible world (*CPJ* 5:182) – the imagination has no *right* to determine the empirical structure of the phenomenal domain. We cannot know how the imagination manages to bring the right kind of aesthetic order to the sensuous manifold, and the understanding is in no position to legislate that the imagination will succeed in this task.

The deep point here is that Kant has now apparently ceded crucial *responsibility* for successful, objectively valid experience away from the understanding, and into only contingently trustworthy hands. In doing so, it seems we should worry that the hard-won mastery of the understanding over its proper domain has been seriously undermined. Understanding now appears to be at the mercy of the contingencies of nature and sensibility in just the way it was not supposed to be. Our pleasure in the suitability of sensuous nature for comprehension can be read as a symptom of the decentering of the understanding's mastery of its domain. It arguably represents a serious challenge to Kant's critical project, as it marks a place where responsibility for successful objective judgment has been displaced from the discursive to the aesthetic domain – a domain that by its very nature has an essentially receptive dimension that cannot be brought under our discursive or legislative control.

How worried was Kant himself about the threat his own expanding aesthetic posed to his critical objectives? Several commentators have thought that it worried him a great deal indeed, to the point where he found ways of suppressing and deflecting the problem rather than addressing it head on. Heidegger has argued that Kant suffered a serious crisis of confidence in the wake of his own insights in the Schematism, and that he was "frightened" away from acknowledging the importance and the autonomy of the aesthetic imagination and its implications for his critical epistemology: "Kant did not carry through with the more original interpretation of the transcendental power of imagination; indeed, he did not even make the attempt in spite of the clear, initial sketching out of such an analytic which he himself recognized for the first time. On the contrary: Kant shrank back from this unknown root" (1990, 115, 110). According to Heidegger, Kant repeatedly tries and fails to bring the imagination back under the rule of the understanding, even going so far as to rewrite the *Critique*

of *Pure Reason* in an effort to suppress and regulate the imagination. For example, he argues that Kant was made sufficiently uncomfortable by the apparent autonomy of the imagination in the A version of the Transcendental Deduction that he went back and rewrote it, with the express goal of assimilating the imagination back into the two-faculty model; hence in the B version of the Deduction, unlike its predecessor, Kant is careful to claim that imagination “belongs to sensibility” and that its synthesis is an “operation of the understanding” (although, as we have seen, this attempt at assimilation is short-lived and dubious).²⁰ Similarly, in this volume McCumber claims that Kant “fights” his own evolving picture of the aesthetic at every step, “refuting or denigrating” his own main conclusions and “abruptly terminating” discussions that would fill out and clarify this picture.

And indeed, it does seem that despite Kant’s architectonic ambitions and his clear desire for a systematic unity of the three *Critiques*, he is remarkably reticent about directly discussing the substantive connections between empirical and aesthetic judgment or the role of figurative synthesis in cognition. Given his normal epistemological tenacity, it is startling how quickly he concludes, in the Schematism, that the art of schematization is an unteachable “blind but indispensable function of the soul,” which (for reasons not directly articulated) “must remain mostly unknown to us” (A74/B103). He shows a similarly surprising lack of curiosity with respect to whether common sense exists a priori or must be *built*, and “thus whether taste is an original and natural faculty, or only the idea of one that is yet to be acquired and is artificial,” raising this question but immediately dismissing it as an issue that “we would not and cannot yet investigate here” (*CPJ* 5:240). Meanwhile, in the same breath in which Kant introduces and acknowledges the pleasure that marks the contingent suitability of natural forms to our discursive understanding, he also dismisses that pleasure as lost to us in the mists of memory. Kant never spells out what connections this pleasure does or doesn’t have to the pleasure of aesthetic beauty. Indeed, once Kant acknowledges the existence of aesthetic judgment proper, and embarks on his analysis of the active aesthetic imagination in that context, he never returns to cognitive judgment in order to make explicit the relationship between the two. Instead, he restricts his analysis to judgments that strive

²⁰ Heidegger writes, “The transcendental power of the imagination is the disquieting unknown that becomes the incentive” for Kant’s overhaul of the first *Critique* – and especially of the Transcendental Deduction – in the B edition (1990, 111).

only for *subjective* validity and hence need not be held accountable to a tribunal of objective truth. Commentators have been left with the task of piecing together a Kantian account of the relationship between aesthetic and cognitive judgment through hints and fragments in the third *Critique*.²¹

Of course, one need not find this sort of biographical reading of Kant's rhetorical peculiarities compelling, and even if one accepts it as psychologically revealing, one need not take it as having philosophical significance. Plenty of commentators remain untroubled by the role played by imagination in Kant's account of cognition, and plenty of those who do find it troubling do not think that it seriously challenges the driving goals of critical epistemology. However, I hope that I have given enough evidence to support a double claim: First, at the very least, it takes some substantial interpretive work to see how we ought to place the aesthetic within Kant's larger account of cognition and critical epistemology. Second, if some of Kant's most interesting arguments are to be taken seriously, then the activity of the sensuous imagination is a precondition for the possibility of any empirical cognition or experience whatsoever, and hence this interpretive task is an indispensable one.

5. THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK

The essays in this book circulate around three interdependent but distinguishable issues. The essays in Part I concern a question with its seat in the first *Critique*: How can we understand what goes on at the pre-discursive level of intuition and imagination during empirical cognition? In particular, can we understand the aesthetic deliverances of sensibility as enabling the subsumption of particular sensible presentations under general discursive concepts, while keeping empirical judgment accountable to an independent objective world? The essays in Part II direct their attention in the first instance to the third *Critique*. They try to discern the cognitive structure of judgments of taste, and the source and character of the normativity that such judgments claim. Given that these judgments do not involve determination under discursive concepts, and hence have no objective validity, what are the standards and principles that govern them, and how do they engage our faculties of imagination and understanding? Finally, the essays in Part III directly concern the place of the aesthetic in the critical epistemology as a whole. They seek to

²¹ Much of this interpretive work goes on in this volume, especially in Part III.

understand the nature of creative, reflective judgment as Kant portrays it in the third *Critique*, and such judgment is placed within and held to standards that invoke a larger community of contingent, finite, sensuous, communicative human subjects. Such a project cannot help but call for a retrospective rereading of the first *Critique*, which seems on the face of it to make room for neither a reflective imagination that escapes the servitude of the understanding nor the relevance of a community bound by shared sensibility to the standards of valid judgment.

The essays in Part I, by Hannah Ginsborg, Richard Manning, and Mark Okrent, all ask how we encounter particulars in sensibility prior to their subsumption under discursive concepts. Manning points out that “a sheer sensibility conceived as utterly indeterminate and unstructured cannot play any explanatory role in accounting for objective cognition.” On his reading, “Kant himself . . . realized this, and backed away from according a significant role to sheer sensibility. But that backing away left a role exclusively for the kind of intuition that is shot through and unified with the spontaneous operations of the understanding.”²² Thus, as Hannah Ginsborg puts it, “intuitions are structured or synthesized by the imagination in a way that *allows for* the representation of generality” (my emphasis). These essays ask what such activity of the imagination might consist of, and how its results can achieve objective validity while avoiding circularity (using discursive rules to structure intuition so as to make it suitable for subsumption under discursive rules).

While Ginsborg shows how Kant’s version of this problem has deep roots in eighteenth-century empiricism, Manning and Okrent show its tight connections to a crucial set of debates in contemporary philosophy of mind and epistemology, which ask how our receptive, sensuous contact with the empirical world can play a properly authoritative role in enabling objective judgment and concept application. Wilfrid Sellars and John McDowell, among others, have fought to avoid casting the sensible as a mute ‘given,’ which would be incapable of grounding concept application and inference, and which would thus leave our conceptual apparatus “spinning in the void,” as McDowell has put it. They have recognized Kant as the most important forbearer of this problem: If intuitions are really ‘blind,’ then concepts seem doomed to remain ‘empty.’ If, on the other hand, sensible presentations can *guide* concept application, then it seems that they must already be intentionally structured, in which case

²² This volume. All quotations in this section are from the essays in this volume unless otherwise indicated.

we need to account for how they earn their structure without falling into circularity or subjective idealism.

In asking how we can grasp an individual as falling under a universal concept, Hannah Ginsborg focuses in particular on the process of reflective concept formation. She argues that the concepts we seek in reflection are actually ‘universal’ in two senses: They are *general* rather than particular, and they are *universally valid* in that the judgments that employ them make a claim on and demand agreement from *everyone*. She argues that what might just look like a terminological ambiguity actually reveals a connection that is crucial to Kant’s account of empirical judgment – and indeed, it is the second, normative and intersubjective sense of universality that makes possible the formation and employment of concepts with universality in the first sense. According to Hume, we form general concepts by forming natural associations between particulars. According to Kant, on Ginsborg’s reading, such associations are a transcendental condition for the possibility of perceptual experience rather than an effect of it. Furthermore, in our act of associating a sensible presentation with others (of this tree with other trees, for instance), we take it that this association is an instance of what *everyone should* do under the circumstances, so that “the generality of my disposition is thus . . . incorporated into my perception rather than remaining external to it, as on the Humean view.” Both our dispositions to associate and our justification for imputing these dispositions to others are grounded in our natural psychology, where that natural psychology is amenable to normative negotiation and development.

Richard Manning worries that Ginsborg’s account does not penetrate deeply enough to solve the problem of how sensible presentations can be structured so as to guide empirical judgment without giving up their accountability to an independent, empirically real world. He points out that her associative dispositions must operate on features of the particulars they associate. But this means that the sensuous presentations of these particulars must already have enough structure to enable such operations. But where did this structure come from? Manning organizes his reading of Kant around a response to McDowell’s attempt to offer a “unified account” in which discursive concepts are already engaged at the level of intuition and the notion of sheer receptivity is deemed “not Kantian at all.” Manning asks, is McDowell’s unified account Kantian, and does it help with the problem? He answers “no” on both counts and ends his essay aporetically. If we bring structure to sensibility through the operations of our discursive understanding, then we have “removed

the one element of cognition innocent of the operations of spontaneity,” and we face the threat of idealism. If we insist that intuition is indeed is a “mere given” or something like unschematized content, then it will not be able to give guidance to empirical judgment. If we posit a separate source of structuring principles, as Kant seems to do in the Schematism and the Analytic of Principles, then we end up with a third man problem, as it becomes unclear how these new principles could produce a structured presentation that is both suited to subsumption under concepts and accountable to the objects encountered in intuition.

Mark Okrent takes on these same issues through an original route: He uses the case of animal experience as a tool for interrogating Kant’s conception of what cognitive work goes on at the prediscursive level of sensibility. He opens with the guiding question, “What does my dog see when he sees a bus?” Okrent’s goal is to give a Kantian account of how dogs manage to represent entities as independent objects (which he argues they clearly do), given that they lack discursive concepts and self-reflection (and hence cannot, for instance, see *that* something is a bus). Notice that if he succeeds in this project, he solves Manning’s problem. For such representations would have the right kind of structure to have intentional content and accountability to the external world without being produced through the synthetic operations of the understanding. As Okrent points out, “the objects which we perceptually encounter . . . must have the same structural character as the objects about which we form judgments.”

Okrent identifies an apparently inconsistent triad of Kantian commitments: (1) Intuitions involve references to objects, (2) animals have intuitions but lack the ability to apply concepts, and (3) cognition of objects requires the capacity for concept application, which in turn requires a unitary consciousness of the act through which a manifold is combined (the transcendental synthesis of apperception). Following Heidegger, and in sharp contrast with someone like McDowell, Okrent proposes resolving the inconsistency by discarding (3), thereby seriously demoting the role played by the discursive understanding in empirical cognition and objective reference. Okrent places more of our (and his dog’s) active cognitive work at the level of prediscursive sensibility, and he thus opts for a more autonomous faculty of sensibility than that suggested by the traditional dualistic model of Kantian cognition.

The essays in Part II, by Paul Guyer, Henry Allison, Melissa Zinkin, and Béatrice Longuenesse, seek to understand the cognitive structure of pure judgments of taste, which do *not* involve subsumption under determinate concepts. They ask how such judgments are structurally related

to and different from regular cognitive judgments; how they engage the faculty of concepts and the synthetic activities of the imagination; and, perhaps most importantly, how they manage to be governed by normative standards with universal validity, given their lack of objectivity and their failure to be governed by discursive rules. In asking these questions, each essay engages with two of the most important and puzzling sections of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*: §9, in which Kant claims that the judgment of taste is grounded in the free, harmonious play of imagination and understanding, and examines the relationship between aesthetic pleasure and the universal communicability of that pleasure, and §§20–2, in which he explains the special kind of necessity that supposedly attaches to judgments of taste, namely, the necessity that *allows* no difference of opinion and *demand*s universal assent on the grounds of a presupposed common sense.

According to Longuenesse, the judgment of taste, far from being marginal or tangential from the point of view of critical epistemology,

is the culminating point of the Copernican revolution that began with the first *Critique*. For the ground of the assertion of the predicate in the judgment of taste is the intuited form of the object *precisely insofar as it is synthesized by the subject*. So in the object, what grounds the assertion of the predicate ‘beautiful’ are just those features that depend on *the synthesizing activity of the subject*.

The Copernican revolution was a turn to the subjective conditions of cognition, and the judgment of taste considers the object just insofar as it relates to these subjective conditions. Since such judgments are not in the business of determining objective properties, they need to be accountable to some standard other than that of objective validity. This standard must be subjective, and yet it must make a *critique* of taste possible and cannot simply reflect an individual’s idiosyncratic, reactive pleasures and displeasures. This is why the appeal to a common sense is so important. But the mere descriptive fact of common agreement about judgments of taste – even if there were such a thing, which there isn’t – wouldn’t particularly provide *normative* import to these judgments, and hence the normative function of common sense in aesthetic judgment must be subtler than a mere measure of typicality. For Zinkin, the demand for universal agreement is nothing less than the claim to participation in the human community. She writes,

When I claim that something is beautiful, . . . it is not that I require others to line up and vote the same way as I do. Rather, I demand that they *share* my feeling of pleasure in the object. Indeed, I do not think that my judgment should count as

a judgment of taste unless I believe everyone ought to agree with me. And if I do make such a claim and others disagree with me, I don't merely feel a difference between us, but alienated from an important aspect of humanity, namely, a shared sensibility.

Part II opens with a dialogue between Paul Guyer and Henry Allison concerning Allison's reading of the cognitive and normative structure of judgments of taste in *Kant's Theory of Taste* (2001). Allison and Guyer are arguably the two most prominent and respected living Kant scholars, and among those who have worked the hardest to treat the whole critical corpus as a unified body of work. In this exchange, the authors debate the nature of reflective judgment and the status and content of the principle of purposiveness, the soundness of Kant's deduction of the pure judgments of taste, and the relationship between aesthetic and moral judgment.

Melissa Zinkin's highly original essay proposes a theory of the nature and ground of the imaginative synthesis that proceeds free from determination by concepts in judgments of taste. She uses Kant's brief account of intensive and extensive magnitudes in the *Critique of Pure Reason* to build a reading of Kant's account of judgments of taste in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Her thesis is that cognitive and aesthetic judgments operate upon fundamentally different forms of sensible intuition; whereas the intuitions we subsume under determinate concepts have extensive magnitude, it is intensive magnitudes that stimulate judgments of taste, and these cannot be captured by discursive concepts. Where extensive magnitudes are summations of homogeneous units apprehended successively (in accordance with the temporal form of inner sense), intensive magnitudes measure qualitative intensities. The intensive form of intuition in a judgment of taste, Zinkin argues, is the judging subject's qualitative, pleasurable or displeasurable sensation of her own mental state, and the *sensus communis* is the a priori form of such sensibility, which is not determinable under discursive concepts.

In "The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited," Paul Guyer, like Zinkin, wants to give an account of the harmonious free play of imagination and understanding in judgments of taste. He neatly divides the plausible readings of the harmony of the faculties into three categories: 'precognitive,' 'multicognitive,' and 'metacognitive' interpretations. According to a precognitive interpretation, the functioning of the imagination in a judgment of taste is just like that in regular empirical cognition minus the application of a determinate concept. Precognitive interpretations

lend themselves to readings that bury a moment of aesthetic judgment within every cognitive judgment, and they thereby suggest that everything cognizable is in some sense beautiful. In contrast, a multicognitive interpretation holds that a judgment of taste finds beauty in an object in virtue of its suggestion of an open-ended plethora of applicable concepts, thereby “allowing the mind to flit back and forth playfully” between possible concept applications. Multicognitive interpretations have to confront Kant’s repeated assertion that in aesthetic judgment we do not subsume sensible forms under *any* determinate concept, but instead under the faculty of concepts as a whole. What’s more, especially in the case of natural beauty, Kant insists that we make judgments of taste on the basis of pure sensible form, not in virtue of potential meanings or cognitive associations. Guyer finds the pan-aestheticism of the precognitive approach and the textual implausibility of the multicognitive approach unacceptable. In their place, he suggests a metacognitive interpretation of the harmony of the faculties: When an object is judged beautiful, our sensuous presentation enables the application of a determinate concept, but it also does more than this, displaying a level of unity, form, and harmony with the goals of the understanding that transcends what is needed for ordinary cognition. Guyer argues that his metacognitive reading not only avoids the pitfalls and accommodates the strengths of the other two readings, but also remains true to crucial tenets of the first *Critique*, such as the impossibility of experiencing something *as an object* without determining it under concepts.

Béatrice Longuenesse is perhaps more committed than any other scholar to respecting Kant’s architectonic aspirations. The goal of her essay is to display the philosophical importance of Kant’s organization of the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, in the third *Critique*, in accordance with the moments of judgment introduced in the Table of Judgments in the first *Critique* (A70/B95). In contrast to other commentators, who have tended to read Kant’s analysis of judgments of taste in terms of the moments of quantity, quality, relation, and modality as a bit forced and neurotic, Longuenesse claims that “as always with Kant, architectonic considerations . . . play an essential role in the unfolding of the substantive argument.”

According to Longuenesse, the use Kant makes of his table of logical forms in analyzing aesthetic judgments reveals these judgments to have a complex structure in which an explicit judgment about the object (“this *X* is beautiful”) is combined with an implicit judgment about the judging subjects themselves (“all judging subjects, in apprehending this object,

ought to experience the same pleasure I experience, and thus ought to judge as I do"). Kant's forms of judgment serve as a sort of "checklist" of questions to ask, and thus help unfold the combination of descriptive and normative features in aesthetic judgments. Concluding with the modality of judgments of taste, Longuenesse argues that according to Kant, the necessity attaching to judgments of taste has both the prescriptive force that otherwise pertains to a moral imperative ("others ought to judge like me") and the descriptive force that otherwise pertains to a judgment of cognition (the connection between the predicate 'beautiful' and the object is a necessary connection of a peculiar kind). She concludes with an analysis of the role Kant assigns to aesthetic judgment in the constitution of a universal community of judging subjects.

Part III of this book consists of essays by Rudolf Makkreel, Kirk Pillow, and John McCumber. These essays bring the first and third *Critiques* into conversation with one another. Where Longuenesse seeks systematic consistency between these works, these three essays try to demonstrate that Kant's own commitments in the third *Critique* compel him to revise, supplement, or even deconstruct crucial tenets of the first *Critique* and its conceptual apparatus. In the first *Critique*, as we saw, Kant distinguishes between determinative and reflective judgment, where reflective judgment involves the creative systemization of experience in accordance with the goals of reason. Despite making this distinction, the *Critique of Pure Reason* contains almost no substantive discussion of reflective judgment. When Kant returns to the topic in the third *Critique*, he gives an account of reflective judgment as involving aesthetic activity free from subservience to the discursive rules of the understanding, as well as an essential reference to the contingent human community as a tribunal of success – and both of these fit uneasily within the confines of the first *Critique*. The three essays are successively far-reaching in their claim that proper deference to the third *Critique* requires us to rethink the first. Rudolf Makkreel portrays Kant's account of reflective judgment and creativity as a substantial deviation from his picture of reflection and determination in the first *Critique*. Kirk Pillow argues that these same parts of the third *Critique* ought to have driven Kant to revise his account of the discursive understanding altogether. And John McCumber argues that the critical project can survive Kant's mature insights into reflective judgment and its relationship to the *sensus communis* only through a radical transformation of its governing ideals.

Rudolf Makkreel shows how the function of reflective judgment is essential to the overall cognitive project of reason, but he argues – contra

Longuenesse (1998) and some others – that reflective judgment is *not* always already at work in concept formation and determinative judgment. Whereas reflection merely brings disparate particular representations together to find what is common for a general concept, reflective judgment aims “to find ‘sufficient kinship’ among empirical laws to allow them to be part of a common system.” Reflective judgment also “seeks universality whenever we are still left with a remainder of particularity” and “discerns lawfulness” in what seems contingent. Driven by the principle of purposiveness, we exercise reflective judgment in seeking systematicity, coherence, and unity in nature, all of which are “intrinsically contingent from the standpoint of the understanding” – and hence successful reflective judgment is essentially pleasurable. Reflective judgment is thus, in Makkreel’s view, not subservient to the goals of the discursive understanding, and it does not directly contribute to empirical judgment; instead, it furthers the ideals of reason by framing our experience through interpretation and orientation. On his reading, the subjective universality of reflective judgment is not grounded in actual commonality that we can presuppose, but is rather a possibility to be cultivated through human community.

Kirk Pillow seeks to challenge the clean distinction between determinative and reflective judgment in Kant, and to insert creative aesthetic reflection and interpretive system-building into the Kantian understanding itself; hence his reading is in direct conflict with Makkreel’s. Pillow argues that in order to accommodate the dimensions of human inquiry that Kant brings to light in the third *Critique*, including in particular his account of aesthetic ideas, his original picture of understanding as a faculty of discursive rules for subsumption has to be revised. Drawing on the work of Nelson Goodman and Catharine Elgin, Pillow proposes a new account of the understanding – one that takes into account how systems of understanding are “themselves the hard-won products of collective labor [embodying] a history of shared human interests and goals.” Understanding an object, for Pillow, might encompass not only determining of which general concepts it instantiates, but also grasping how to use it, its history, its relationship to other objects and human practices, its symbolic meanings, its location within a system of property rights, and so forth. Such understanding is governed not just by the ideal of truth, but also by a host of cognitive values driven by our collective interests, such as salience, symbolic resonance, and coherence, many of which have an ineliminably aesthetic dimension. Pillow concludes that “Kant helps us see the way to a unification of the cognitive and the aesthetic, so long

as we understand cognition more richly than as conceptual subsumption, and so long as we are not tempted by the chimera of pure aesthetic disinterest.”

John McCumber’s deconstructive and constructive intentions are far-reaching; he promises to reveal Kant’s “helplessness” in the face of the fact that despite his attempts at mastering his carefully bounded terrain, “something foreign and unsought, yet intelligent, is surging into [his] philosophy” when he writes the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. McCumber argues that Kant gives us the resources in the third *Critique* for the beginning of an account of rational *revision* of our concepts and cognitive goals, which is an epistemic project distinct from determination, reflection, or system-building in accordance with fixed principles. While agreeing with Kant that we need to presuppose a conceptual framework as a condition for the possibility of experience, he claims that Kant himself gives us reason (despite himself) to see such presupposed frameworks as historically developing and always open for critical revision rather than as timeless and a priori. The upshot is that the faculty of reason and its governing principles end up being “historical through and through,” and that Kant’s quest for discursive mastery and transcendental epistemic security are undone by the aesthetic activity that insinuates itself into his theory of judgment. Hence, according to McCumber, the third *Critique* transforms the critical project into something new and suspiciously Hegelian.

Collectively, these essays draw upon the texts, methods, and debates of both the continental and analytic philosophical traditions, and they situate Kant in the history of philosophy, not just as a respondent to the high rationalism and empiricism of the early modern era, but as a touchstone antecedent to Hegel, Schiller, Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein, Sellars, Gadamer, Foucault, Davidson, Goodman, and McDowell. They reveal Kant’s account of judgment, and the dialectics of aesthetics and cognition within that account, as profoundly relevant to contemporary debates in epistemology and philosophy of mind, and more narrowly to debates surrounding the nature of empirical experience and the metaphysics of normativity. The essays yield important lessons concerning the ineliminable and yet often problematic place of imagination, sensibility, and aesthetic experience in perception and cognition.

PART ONE

SENSIBLE PARTICULARS AND DISCURSIVE
JUDGMENT

Thinking the Particular as Contained under the Universal

Hannah Ginsborg

In a well-known passage from the Introduction to Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant defines the power or faculty of judgment (*Urteilkraft*) as "the capacity to think the particular as contained under the universal" (Introduction IV, 5:179).¹ He goes on to distinguish two ways in which this faculty can be exercised, namely, as determining or as reflecting. These two ways are defined as follows: "If the universal (the rule, the principle, the law) is given, then judgment, which subsumes the particular under it . . . is *determining*. But if merely the particular is given, for which the universal is to be found, then judgment is merely *reflecting*" (ibid.) As Kant goes on to make clear, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is particularly concerned with judgment in its capacity as reflecting rather than determining. It is concerned, that is, with how we are to find universals (which he glosses as rules, principles, or laws) for given particulars.

Despite the fact that the term 'concept' does not appear in this set of definitions, Kant's discussions of judgment elsewhere make it clear that this faculty can be identified at least in part with our capacity to think particular objects under concepts, in particular empirical concepts.² The sense of 'universal' (*allgemein*), then, would appear to be the same sense that is implied in Kant's characterization of a concept as a "universal" (or as it is sometimes translated, a "general") representation (*Logic* §1, 9:91).

¹ All references to Kant's works, except for the *Critique of Pure Reason*, give the volume and page number of the Akademie edition of Kant's collected writings (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1902–), with other details as appropriate. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* give the usual A and B pagination. All translations are my own.

² See especially Section V of the First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 20:211–16.

To say that a concept is universal or general is to say that it is “common to several objects” (ibid.), and hence contrasts with an intuition, which is a singular representation. The question of how we are to think the particular as contained under the universal would thus appear to be the question of how we can grasp an individual thing under a concept, that is, how we can think it as having a feature that can at least in principle be shared with other objects.³ And reflecting judgment more specifically would be concerned with the question not of how we can apply concepts that we already have, but how we can arrive at concepts in the first place.

There is, however, another, apparently distinct sense of ‘universal’ that is also invoked by Kant in describing the exercise of judgment, more specifically judgment in its capacity as reflecting. In particular, Kant uses this sense of ‘universal’ when he describes the claim to agreement made by a judgment of beauty, although he makes clear that this same claim is made by cognitive judgments also (see for example *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Introduction VII, 5:191). “Universality” in this sense means, as he puts it, “validity for everyone” (§8, 5:215). The pleasure in an object expressed in a judgment of beauty is “universal” (§6, 5:211) because, in experiencing it, I take it that everyone – all human beings – ought to feel the same pleasure when confronted with the same object. This second sense of “universal” is unlike the first in that it alludes not to a plurality of objects, but rather to a plurality of subjects. Saying that my judgment of beauty is universal in this sense – or as Kant also puts it, universally valid – is a matter of saying that it should be shared by everyone who judges the object.⁴

My aim in this essay is to sketch a connection between these two senses of ‘universality.’ I want to suggest that when Kant speaks of judgment as “thinking the particular as contained under the universal,” he has the second as well as the first sense of universality in mind. “Thinking the particular under the universal” means not only thinking of an object as having a feature shared in common with a multiplicity of other objects, but also thinking of one’s own particular response to an object as universal or universally valid, as one does in a judgment of taste. More specifically,

³ There is also a related question of how we can think a particular concept or law under a higher-level concept or law; I leave this question aside in the present essay.

⁴ In their translation of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews record the distinction between these senses by using ‘general’ for the first, and ‘universal’ for the second, although with some exceptions (see the translators’ notes at 8 and 66). In discussing Kant, I will mostly use ‘universal’ for both senses but I will sometimes use ‘general’ for the first, for example in discussing Hume.

I want to suggest that the second, intersubjective sense of universality is more fundamental in that universality in this second sense makes possible universality in the first sense. It is only because we can think of our responses to objects as universal in the sense of being intersubjectively valid that we are capable of thinking particular objects under universals in the sense of subsuming them under concepts that capture what they have in common with other objects.⁵

I

I want to begin laying out this connection by describing a familiar problem that arises for Kant in connection with the first kind of universality, a problem that I shall refer to as the problem of empirical universality or empirical generality. The problem is that of how to account for the possession of empirical concepts, that is, concepts that are acquired on the basis of experience as opposed to originating a priori in our cognitive faculties. Experience for Kant consists in the first instance of those representations that come to us because of the way in which our senses are affected, that is, sensible intuitions. And as Kant emphasizes, sensible intuitions are, in themselves, singular. To the extent that we regard experience as consisting in sensible intuitions alone, experience can acquaint us only with individual things, not with features or properties that they possess in common with other things. Experience can be the source only of singular representations, not of representations that are general or universal.

So far, this statement of the problem is too simple. For as Kant makes clear in the *Analytic of the Critique of Pure Reason*, experience involves not just the reception of representations in sensibility, but an activity of imagination, called synthesis, through which the manifold of sensible impressions is given order and unity. Experience, understood as the product of this activity, still consists in intuitions – that is, of singular representations – but these intuitions are structured or synthesized by the imagination in a way that allows for the representation of generality. Specifically, Kant holds, the synthesis of imagination proceeds according to rules or schemata, some of which are a priori and some of which are empirical. It is in virtue of the a priori rules that our intuitions come to represent an objective world of causally interacting substances standing

⁵ I will be defending this claim only for empirical concepts, although I believe that it holds also for the pure concepts of the understanding.

in spatiotemporal relations to one another. These rules are the schemata in virtue of which the pure concepts of understanding are applicable to experience. But there are also rules or schemata corresponding to our empirical concepts, and it is in virtue of their accordance with these rules that our intuitions come to represent objects as having determinate empirical features, for example as having qualities like *red* or belonging to kinds like *dog* or *house*. If we consider experience as consisting not just in raw, unsynthesized data, but rather as the product of our imaginative activity, then it would seem that experience does make possible the representation of empirical features. For in that case, it would seem that we can arrive at empirical concepts by reflecting on, and thus making explicit, the rules governing our imaginative activity.

But while this qualification is necessary if we are to understand Kant's position, it does not resolve the problem. For now we are faced with the question of the source of these rules. The rules themselves, it would seem, cannot derive from experience regarded as the product of imaginative activity, since they are required for the possibility of this activity and of the experience to which it gives rise. But since they are no less general or universal than the concepts that they are supposed to make possible, it is no less problematic to regard them as derived from the raw material of sensibility.

We can get clearer about the problem by looking at the passage where Kant appears to offer his most explicit account of the formation of empirical concepts. This is §6 of the *Logic*, where Kant describes what he calls the "logical acts" of comparison, reflection, and abstraction. He illustrates these acts, which he ascribes to the understanding, in the following often-quoted example:

I see e.g. a spruce, a willow and a linden. In first comparing these objects among themselves, I notice that they are different from one another with respect to the trunk, the branches, the leaves and so forth; but now I go on to reflect only on what they have in common, the trunk, the branches, the leaves themselves; and I abstract from their size, shape and so forth; thus I receive [*bekommen*] a concept of tree. (§6, note 1; 9:94–5)

The idea behind this example seems to be that we acquire the concept of a tree by being presented with a finite number of trees and noting both the features that differentiate them (for example, the shapes and sizes of their respective leaves and branches) and the features that they have in common (for example, the fact that they have leaves and branches in the first place). By abstracting from the features that differentiate them and attending to the common features we arrive at the concept of a tree,

which presumably can be characterized as the concept of a thing with leaves, branches, and a trunk.⁶ But this example does not yield a satisfying account of how we arrive at empirical concepts. In the first place, the example assumes that we are capable at the outset of recognizing what is presented to us as having leaves, branches, and a trunk, and this would seem to presuppose that we possess the concepts *leaf*, *branch* and *trunk*. So we need to explain the acquisition of these concepts on the basis of further concepts, and a regress threatens. Now it might be supposed that Kant is in fact committed to the view that sensibility gives us basic features such as color and shape, and that the operations of comparison, reflection, and abstraction are responsible for the formation of more sophisticated concepts from these basic ones. On this supposition, Kant holds something like the compositional view of concepts suggested by Locke's distinction between simple and complex ideas, a distinction taken over by Berkeley and Hume. Sensibility is capable of giving us certain basic features, or respects in which objects resemble one another; imaginative or intellectual activity is required only in the formation of the more complex concepts or ideas through which – for example – objects are sorted into higher-level kinds characterized by a multiplicity of features. But this seems to be precluded by Kant's familiar view that intuitions without concepts are "blind," which suggests that intuitions on their own could not give us features of objects, even simple features like color and shape. And an example from student notes on Kant's logic lectures tells against the compositional picture by suggesting that an activity of comparison is required, not only for the acquisition of higher-level concepts characterized by a multiplicity of features or marks, but also for arriving at the apparently simple concept *red*.⁷

A second difficulty that arises in connection with the tree example is that even if we assume that we possess the concepts of leaf, branch, and trunk, the example gives no indication of why our experience of the three trees should give rise to a concept involving just these features, as opposed to the many other features that those three trees have in common. For example, a spruce, a willow, and a linden typically have in common that they lack edible fruit, that they afford a degree of shelter from the rain, that they are composed of woody material, and that insects live in them. So why do we not attend to these features so as to arrive

⁶ See Béatrice Longuenesse's helpful discussion (1998, 115–16); I agree with her view that comparison, reflection, and abstraction should be seen as aspects of a single activity. For other discussions of this passage see Pippin (1982, 112ff.), Ginsborg (1997a, 53), and Allison (2001, 21ff.).

⁷ *Wiener Logik*, 24:904–5.

at a concept that would include the particular trees presented to us, but also exclude fruit trees and include wooden houses? It is hard to suppose any explanation for our privileging the tree-characterizing features other than that we are already in some sense representing the sample objects as trees, so that possession of the concept *tree* is already assumed from the start. Now it might be objected that this problem derives from the artificiality of the example. In real life we derive the concept *tree* from exposure to a much larger sample of trees, and any child who began associating the word 'tree' with houses, or refusing to apply it to apple trees, would very quickly be corrected. But what is common to the example and to real life is that the number of trees we have to go on is finite. And it is always possible – using the sorts of maneuvers typified by Goodman's *grue* and Kripke's *quus* – to come up with any number of features held in common by a finite group of objects, so that any finite sample can be regarded as exemplifying any number of nonstandard kinds.

The upshot of this seems to be that we cannot regard the appeal to comparison, reflection, and abstraction as constituting Kant's answer to the question of how empirical concepts are possible, but only as explaining how concepts we already possess can be clarified or made explicit.⁸ That is, Kant's account is not meant to explain how we come to possess the capacity to represent the objects in question as trees, but rather how we move from our implicit grasp of them as trees to an explicit understanding of the concept *tree*: that is, a grasp of the concept that allows us to specify criteria for a thing's being a tree. Another way of putting the point is to say that the operation of comparison, reflection, and abstraction presupposes that our experience of the trees is already the product of synthesis according to empirical schemata. To put the point in terms of Béatrice Longuenesse's useful distinction between two senses of 'concept,'⁹ it explains how we move from the possession of an empirical concept understood as a schema or rule for synthesis to possession of an empirical concept understood as a discursive rule for inference. But this means that we need to find another answer to what now emerges as the more fundamental question about concept acquisition: How are we to account for our possession of the rule or schema that enables us to see the presented object as a tree in the first place?

A suggestive proposal made by Longuenesse and taken up by Henry Allison is that we can understand the schemata as generated by the very same act of comparison by which we move from schemata to discursive

⁸ This is Pippin's view (1982, 113).

⁹ 1998, 46–7.

concepts. Longuenesse understands the act of comparison as a comparison of schemata, but she says that “to compare schemata . . . is first of all to *generate* these schemata” so that “the schemata result from the very acts of universalizing comparison of which they are the object” (116–17).¹⁰ To paraphrase, it is only through our comparison of schemata that the schemata come into being in the first place. This formulation is, on the face of it, paradoxical: How can we compare rules that do not exist prior to the comparison? But it hints at a bold strategy for resolving the difficulty: namely, to understand the rules of synthesis as existing not prior to, but in virtue of, our awareness of our synthesis as rule-governed. In other words, the activity of reflection on our synthesis, through which we arrive at the awareness of it as governed by rules, is precisely what is responsible for the rule-governed character of our synthesis in the first place.

As will become clear later, I am very sympathetic toward the general strategy that I take to be suggested by Longuenesse’s proposal. But I find it hard to see how the specific proposal itself can be successful. Even if we accept the general point that there can be no rules without awareness of our activity as rule-governed, it is not clear how that awareness can in turn depend on a comparison of the very rules that it supposedly makes possible. In other words, it is hard to see how the activity of comparison that Kant describes in the *Logic* – that is, a comparison of perceptually represented objects to see what they have in common – could take place without antecedent schemata, and hence how it could be responsible for them. For, as we noted, this kind of comparison seems to presuppose awareness of what is presented to us as having the feature corresponding to the concept to be made explicit, and that in turn seems to presuppose a prior synthesis of the manifold according to that concept.

Moreover, Longuenesse herself seems to draw back from this strong proposal by suggesting that the rule is in some sense present prior to the act of comparison, although in an attenuated sense. Thus she says that the rule is present in intuition prior to the act of comparison, albeit “unreflected” and “obscure” (118). Although it lacks the “form of universality,” which it can have only insofar as we have a clear consciousness of it, it is still, as she puts it, “universal in itself” (*ibid.*). In another context, she describes our apprehension in intuition as “guided” by the rule (49): something that would seem to preclude the possibility of the rule itself being yielded by a comparison of intuitions, since it would appear to demand that we grasp the rule prior to our activity of apprehension. This implies that she is committed, after all, to the presence of the rule

¹⁰ Page references to Longuenesse are to her *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (1998).

prior to the act of comparison, so that something other than comparison is required for its generation. One account she gives of the origin of this rule appeals to what she calls an “embryonic” form of comparison, which exists in sensibility itself (114n.25). Similarly, we engage in what she calls, following Moritz Steckelmacher, a “silent judging,” which is governed by, and teleologically oriented toward, conscious acts of judging (122). This suggests that we acquire the schemata not in virtue of the very same logical comparison that yields empirical concepts, but through a sort of proto-comparison, which precedes that full-fledged comparison. More generally, it suggests that we can understand the acquisition of empirical schemata as a subconscious process, one conceived on the model of the conscious processes by which we clarify concepts and combine them in judgments. But if there is a subconscious process responsible for the initial acquisition of empirical concepts, it is hard to see how we could understand it on the model of the conscious comparison and reflection through which concepts are clarified. For that conscious comparison, in contrast to the subconscious comparison supposedly responsible for schemata, depends on our possession of representations that are already intrinsically conceptual. And it is not clear what it would be for the corresponding operations to be carried out on a manifold that is not yet synthesized according to rules and so presents no general features to serve as materials for our comparison.¹¹

II

As many commentators have pointed out, the problem of empirical universality is not unique to Kant. Kant’s view that experience presents us

¹¹ It might be thought that the question of how empirical schemata are acquired can be answered by appeal to the activity of transcendental imagination in accordance with the categories. Longuenesse herself suggests that this is at least part of the answer: A complete account of how we acquire empirical schemata requires us to consider the “prior activity of associative imagination, under the guidance of productive imagination” (116n29), and it is only once we have recognized the role of the categories as “rules for forming rules” that “we get an answer to the question, How do empirical concepts themselves emerge?” (51n.25). However, as I have argued in “Lawfulness without a Law” (56–7), we cannot make sense of synthesis according to the categories unless we can make sense of it also as governed by empirical schemata, so we cannot appeal to it independently as an answer to the question of how empirical schemata are applied; moreover, even if we could make sense of synthesis according to the categories alone, it would not be sufficient to account for the acquisition of empirical schemata. Longuenesse also takes the “concepts of reflection” discussed in the *Amphiboly* to play a role in empirical concept formation (122ff.), but for reasons similar to those just mentioned, I do not think that they help to address the problem with which we are concerned.

only with particulars is derived from the empiricist tradition represented by Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, and these philosophers too are faced with the problem of how to explain our representation of general features common to a multiplicity of things. Locke seems to offer an answer to the problem through his account of “abstraction,” whereby “the mind makes the particular ideas received from particular beings to become general” (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II xi 9). Thus, he says, “the same colour being observed to day in Chalk or Snow, which the mind yesterday received from Milk, it considers that appearance alone, makes it a representative of all that kind; and having given it the name Whiteness it by that sound signifies the same quality wheresoever to be imagin’d or met with; and thus Universals . . . are made” (ibid.). Or, to take the more complex example given in Book III of the *Essay*, children arrive at the general idea of *man* by observing “that there are a great many other things in the World, that in some common agreements of Shape, and several other Qualities, resemble their Father and Mother, and those Persons they have been used to . . . wherein they make nothing new, but only leave out of the complex idea they had of *Peter* and *James*, *Mary* and *Jane*, that which is peculiar to each, and retain only what is common to them all” (III iii 7). But these examples suggest two problems analogous to those raised by Kant’s *tree* example. First, they both seem to presuppose an antecedent recognition of general features: We have to observe the “same colour” in milk and snow, and we have to recognize “common agreements of shape and other qualities” in respect of which individual human beings resemble one another. Second, even granted that such basic features of color and shape are given to us, it is not clear how we can arrive at a complex general idea of *man* unless we already in some sense perceive the individuals presented to us as human beings. For otherwise, how could we know which of the many “common agreements” we have observed in them belong to the concept of man and which do not? So it seems that, after all, Locke must regard our sensory ideas as presenting us with general qualities and features in spite of their supposedly “particular” character.

The situation is no different with Berkeley, who, in spite of his vigorous polemic against the doctrine of abstract ideas, holds essentially the same view.¹² In terms reminiscent of Locke, Berkeley says that “an idea which

¹² In claiming that Berkeley’s view is close to Locke’s, I am following Michael Ayers; see Ayers (1991), I 250–1. Longuenesse opposes Locke’s view on generality to that of Berkeley and Hume, and sees Kant as to some degree returning to a Lockean view (see 119); as will become clear, the view presented here disagrees with hers on both of these points.

considered in itself is particular becomes general by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort" (*Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introduction, §12). This is possible insofar as we are capable of disregarding certain features of the object presented by that particular idea. For example, if we are carrying out a geometrical demonstration about triangles in general, we draw on an idea of some particular triangle but without invoking in our demonstration such features as the triangle's being right-angled or isosceles. This is possible because a man "may consider a figure merely as triangular, without attending to the particular qualities of the angles or relations of the sides" (*ibid.*, §16). But if this account is understood as addressing the problem of empirical universality, it raises the same difficulties we saw with Kant and again with Locke. First, it is not clear how any general features at all can be given to us compatibly with the particularity of sensory ideas. Second, even granted that certain basic sensory features can be given to us, it is still not clear what allows us to privilege some features rather than others as contributing to a higher-level property.

What about Hume? In his discussion of abstract ideas in the *Treatise*,¹³ Hume claims to endorse Berkeley's view, which he characterizes as the view that "all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them" (17). The reference to "recalling," however, suggests that Hume is going beyond Berkeley; and indeed, his development of the view shows that this is in fact the case. For the way in which ideas acquire their "more extensive signification" depends on a characteristically Humean mechanism of customary or habitual association. According to Hume's account, a particular idea becomes general insofar as it is attached to a word that in turn is customarily applied to that idea and to others that resemble it. When we hear the word, it not only calls to mind that particular idea but also, as Hume puts it, "revives the custom" by which the word is used to apply to the various resembling ideas. In other words, the hearing of the word puts the mind in a state of readiness by which any one of the class of resembling ideas can be called to mind.¹⁴ Hume draws out the implications of this view in his discussion of the use of ideas in reasoning. When we reason, for example, about the nature of triangles,

¹³ *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Part I, chapter vii. Page references are to the Selby-Bigge edition (1978).

¹⁴ Don Garrett (1997, 63) helpfully gives this class a name: the "revival set."

we have in our mind a particular idea of a triangle, for example the idea of an equilateral triangle of a certain size; and we initially draw conclusions about triangles in general based on that particular idea. If, however, we erroneously draw a conclusion that relies on some feature that is not universal to triangles, then an idea contradicting that conclusion will come to mind, leading us to reject it. Thus, if we claim on the basis of our idea that the angles of a triangle are equal to one another, “the other individuals of a scalenum and isosceles, which we overlook’d at first, immediately crowd in upon us, and make us perceive the falsehood of this proposition” (21).¹⁵

Despite the references to custom, which distinguish Hume’s view from that of Locke and Berkeley, the view is often thought to suffer from the same problem. Hume begins his account of the formation of general ideas by saying that “when we have found a resemblance among several objects that often occur to us, we apply the same name to all of them” (20). This seems to imply that the customary use of the name, and the associated disposition for recalling ideas to mind, depend on the antecedent recognition of a resemblance among the relevant ideas. And this in turn seems to assume that we already have a general idea, namely, one of the respect in which the particular ideas resemble one another. Put in terms of Hume’s example, the problem is that we cannot acquire a custom of calling all triangles by the same name, and relatedly a disposition whereby a particular idea of one triangle calls other triangles to mind, unless we already possess the general concept of a triangle.¹⁶ But although Hume’s reference to “finding a resemblance” does appear to lay him open to this objection, there is another way of understanding Hume’s view on which the problem does not arise. On this interpretation of Hume, the acquisition of the relevant custom does not depend on an antecedent recognition of resemblances among our ideas. Rather, it is a basic psychological fact about us that our associations of ideas follow certain regular patterns, so that, for example, the idea of a particular triangle will naturally call to mind ideas of other triangles in preference, say, to ideas of quadrilaterals or circles or indeed things that are not plane figures at all. It is because of these natural patterns of association that, once the word ‘triangle’ has been applied to a representative sample of

¹⁵ For an illuminating discussion see Broughton (2000).

¹⁶ See Kemp Smith (1940, 260). Henry Allison raises this objection and also a related one: How can the idea of an isosceles or scalene triangle, called to mind, be recognized as a counterexample unless we already recognize it *as* a triangle? (2001, 23).

triangles, we will become disposed to apply it to triangles generally; and, relatedly, that when we entertain hypotheses involving the word ‘triangle’, it is precisely ideas of triangles that we are disposed to call to mind as potential counterexamples. “Finding a resemblance” among triangles, on this reading, does not precede the acquisition of the corresponding disposition; rather, acquiring the disposition is just what finding the resemblance consists in.¹⁷

If we understand Hume in this way, then his account of empirical generality is very different from that of Locke and Berkeley, and different in a way that bypasses the problem. Hume’s view does not presuppose the representation of empirical generality, but rather accounts for it by exploiting the generality of a custom or disposition. Reverting to the *tree* example from the previous section, we represent the general concept *tree* insofar as we entertain an idea of one particular tree accompanied by a state of readiness to call to mind ideas of other particular trees: a state of readiness that is in turn possible because we have acquired a disposition to associate different ideas of trees with the same general term and hence with one another. Such a disposition is general because it is indefinite in scope. The ideas we are disposed to call to mind in connection with our initial particular idea and its associated general term need not be limited to ideas of trees we have actually experienced, still less to ideas of trees that have been expressly associated with the word ‘tree.’ But this does not prevent our acquiring the disposition on the basis of exposure to a limited sample of trees. And if acquisition of the general idea or concept can be identified with acquisition of the disposition, then the problems noted in connection with Kant’s use of the example can be avoided. On coming to associate the word ‘tree’ with spruces, willows, and lindens, most human beings will in fact form a disposition such that the same

¹⁷ The dispositionalist position ascribed to Hume on this interpretation has some affinity to the “psychological nominalism” that, according to Wilfrid Sellars, we arrive at through “modifying” Hume’s view (§29 of “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” 1963, 160–1). Broughton allows it as a possible reading but does not herself endorse it. One commentator who does endorse a dispositionalist reading of I vii is Ayers (1991, I, 257), although his account differs from the present view, and from that of most other commentators, in taking Hume’s concern in the passage to be not the problem of empirical generality, but rather the problem of how a priori knowledge is possible. It is not essential to the argument of this essay that the interpretation described here does in fact correspond to Hume’s view. However, in spite of the fact that the reading does not fit perfectly with the text of I, vii itself, I think there is a case to be made for its adoption on the grounds that it coheres well with Hume’s naturalistic outlook overall and, in particular, with his denial that there is any difference in principle between human reason and the reason of animals (see III, xvi).

word will call to mind fruit trees but not wooden houses. And that is just to say – on the interpretation of Hume I am suggesting – that they will acquire the general concept *tree*.

So understood, however, Hume's account suffers from another kind of problem. We can describe the problem by saying that, even though there is generality in the account, it is in the wrong place: It does not enter into the content of our ideas, but rather it is external to them. The account is supposed to explain how a particular idea can become "general in its representation": how it is that in having the idea of a particular tree or triangle, I come to represent the general property of being a tree or a triangle. But why should the representational character of a particular idea be transformed in this way simply by being accompanied by a state of readiness to call to mind other particular ideas? We might try to answer this question by saying that it is the awareness of my own state of readiness, rather than the particular idea itself, that constitutes my possession of the general idea. In entertaining the particular idea of a tree or triangle, we might say, I feel myself impelled or driven to call to mind other ideas of trees or triangles, and it is in that feeling that the representation of an object as a tree, or as a triangle, consists. However, this answer is unsatisfactory, since the representation of a general feature of objects seems to require more than the awareness of a subjective tendency to associate ideas. Perhaps the idea of a willow tree always brings to mind childhood picnics or the thought of linden trees inevitably reminds of me of Berlin; and perhaps I am well aware of these patterns of association among my ideas. This does not mean that I recognize a feature common to willows and picnics or to lindens and Berlin. Even if I can explain my tendencies of association in terms of objective relations among the things represented by my ideas (for example, that my family used to have picnics near a willow tree or that Berlin's most famous avenue is planted with lindens), my awareness of those tendencies does not constitute a grasp of any feature or relation belonging to the objects represented. All that I am aware of is something about my own psychological makeup, and it is not clear how such an awareness could ever amount to the representation of general features belonging to things independently of me.¹⁸

¹⁸ Perhaps the account could be modified to accommodate these cases of idiosyncratic association by supposing that awareness of an associative tendency amounts to the representation of a general feature only if I can rule out the tendency's being due to some particular quirk of my psychology. Thus modified, the account says that I represent something as a tree if I not only call to mind other trees in association with it, but also take myself, in so doing, to manifest a tendency that is part of human nature, in the sense that

III

We have now considered two pre-Kantian, and more specifically empiricist, positions on the question of empirical generality or universality. The first is that of Locke and Berkeley, and it can also be ascribed to Hume if Hume's view is understood according to what we might call an 'intentionalist' reading. The second is the position occupied by Hume if we understand him on the alternative, 'dispositionalist' reading. On the first position, despite the supposed particularity of our sensory ideas (or in Hume's case, impressions), they present us not only with individual things, but also with general features common to a plurality of things. On the second position, the particularity of ideas remains unimpaired, and the possibility of general ideas is accounted for in terms of the possession of general dispositions to associate particular ideas in determinate ways. But neither of these positions is satisfactory: On the first, the representation of empirical generality is invoked too soon, whereas on the second, it fails to make any appearance at all.

Is there any alternative? I think that there is, and I want to characterize it by taking as a starting point the dispositionalist reading of Hume.¹⁹ Let us go back to the suggestion that we can account for my entertaining the general idea *tree* by supposing that I have an idea of some particular tree, coupled with a state of readiness to call to mind ideas of other trees. And let us suppose that on some occasion I do have a particular idea of a tree, say a linden, and that due to my having the relevant disposition, an idea of some other tree, say a sycamore, comes to mind. Now, as we saw, the problem with this suggestion is that, even if we add some kind of awareness of being impelled to think of the sycamore, the most that this account can give us is a recognition of a certain psychological tendency in myself. It does not give us what we want, namely the recognition of something common to the linden and the sycamore. But what if we supplement the suggestion by adding that, when the idea of the sycamore comes to mind, I take its appearance in my mind to be *appropriate*? More specifically, what if we say that I take the idea of the sycamore to be the upshot not merely of a certain tendency in myself, but of a tendency that is universally valid

it is common to all or most human beings. But the question remains: Why should that amount to representing a feature or property of things, as opposed to a psychological tendency in myself (albeit one shared by human beings in general)? Even if we rule out idiosyncratic associations, it is hard to see how simply being aware of a tendency to call certain ideas to mind could amount to the awareness of a general feature that the objects of the ideas have in common.

¹⁹ From now on I shall refer to Hume, taken on this reading, as "Hume" *tout court*.

in Kant's sense: a tendency that *everyone ought* to feel when entertaining the idea of a linden? If we amend the suggestion in this way, then we can address the problem by saying that my awareness goes beyond a recognition of actual psychological processes and tendencies in myself. In contrast to the problematic examples of willows and picnics, or lindens and Berlin, I take it not only that I myself have a tendency to associate the idea of the linden and the idea of the sycamore, but also that this association between ideas is appropriate, or conforms to an intersubjectively valid standard governing how these ideas ought to be associated. I take it that these ideas are not merely associated in my own mind, but that they belong together in the sense that everyone ought to feel the same tendency to associate them as I do. And this makes it much less implausible to suppose that my awareness could amount to a grasp of an objective feature shared by the sycamore and the linden themselves.

Now I want to propose that this amended suggestion represents, at least in part, Kant's solution to the problem of empirical generality or universality. More precisely, I want to see Kant as adopting a Humean view, but with two significant modifications. First, Kant expands the role that Hume had ascribed to the association of ideas, holding that dispositions to associate ideas are required not just for general thought and belief, but also for perception itself. So for Kant, it is not just in thinking about trees that we are in a state of readiness to call to mind particular ideas of trees; rather, the very perception of a tree involves the activation of a disposition to call to mind previous representations of trees. Second, and more importantly for the purposes of this essay, Kant gives the Humean view a normative twist. My perception of a tree not only involves my being in a state of readiness to call to mind – or in Kant's terms to “reproduce” – representations of other trees; it also involves my taking it that, insofar as I do call ideas of other trees to mind, I am doing what I and everyone else ought to be doing under the circumstances. The generality of my disposition is thus, so to speak, incorporated into my perception rather than remaining external to it as on the Humean view. I see the tree *as* a tree in virtue not merely of my state of readiness to call to mind previously perceived trees in connection with it, but also of my awareness that this state of readiness is *appropriate* given my present perceptual situation.²⁰

²⁰ I do not mean to claim here that the two conditions mentioned in this sentence are sufficient for the representation of generality. There are many cases in which someone might associate ideas in a certain way, and take her associations to be appropriate rather than idiosyncratic, without her representing the objects of her ideas as having a common

To see what might lead us to understand Kant in this way, let us go back to the discussion of Kant that we left at the end of Section II. We saw in Section I that the procedures of comparison, reflection, and abstraction described in the *Logic* do not by themselves explain how the acquisition of empirical concepts is possible. Rather, they presuppose that we already possess empirical concepts in the form of schemata, that is, rules for the imaginative synthesis of the manifold. They explain how we arrive at an explicit understanding of these concepts, one that enables us, for example, to grasp that something counts as a tree if it is the kind of thing that has leaves, branches, and a trunk. But they do not explain how we come to be able to see something as a tree in the first place, since that is accounted for in terms of the imagination's activity in accordance with rules. We find Kant's most detailed account of this activity in the section of the first edition Transcendental Deduction entitled the "Threefold Synthesis." The account of imaginative synthesis that Kant gives in this section is extremely complex, but at its center is an activity that he calls the "reproduction of the sensible manifold". This is an activity of recalling previous perceptions, where the recall involved is of two different kinds. In the first, we call to mind the perceptions that immediately preceded a current perception in order to form a coherent image. For example, in order to perceive a line, we must "reproduce" the previously perceived segments alongside the currently perceived segment. In the second, we call to mind representations of previously perceived objects of the same kind as the one we are now perceiving. This allows us to represent the object of our current perception as having features that do not impinge on our senses at the time of perception, but that we nonetheless perceive as belonging to the object. For example, I can perceive a body as impenetrable even though I do not touch it because, in perceiving it visually, I also call to mind perceptions of other bodies in which their impenetrability did impinge on my senses. Similarly, I might see a distant

feature: for example when the perception of a tree calls to mind birds or lumber. What is required further, on the view I am presenting, is that the subject's awareness of the appropriateness of her associations be 'primitive', that is, not based on the prior appreciation of some fact about the world that legitimizes the association. In the example given, the subject presumably takes her associations to be appropriate on the grounds that birds live in trees and trees can be made into lumber. But in the kinds of cases that I take Kant to have in mind as accounting for the representation of generality, the subject cannot cite any reason for the appropriateness of her associations. I discuss this 'primitive' appreciation of appropriateness in Section V, in connection with the question of whether one can take one's associations to be appropriate without antecedently grasping a rule in virtue of which they are appropriate.

tree as having leaves even though I am sufficiently far away that a homogeneous mass of green would make the same sensory impression. What allows me to see it as having leaves, as opposed to being draped with green fabric, is that in seeing it, I reproduce previous representations of trees in which the distinctness of the leaves directly affected my sense organs.

Both these kinds of reproduction clearly have some affinity with the association of ideas as Hume conceives it. And the second, in particular, is reminiscent of the kind of association invoked in Hume's account of how particular ideas become general. But the differences may seem too pronounced for it to be possible to assimilate Kant's view to a version of Hume's, even taking into account the two modifications I mentioned earlier. The most important difference has to do with the rule-governed character of reproduction. For Kant, at least as he is standardly understood, our imaginative activity of reproducing representations is not the effect of habit or custom, as the corresponding associations are for Hume, but is carried out in accordance with a previously grasped rule. In other words, imagination is guided in its reproductive syntheses by understanding: and this guidance takes place in virtue of our grasp of concepts, both pure and empirical. This presents a sharp contrast with Hume, for whom associations of ideas are not guided by any intellectual faculty but are simply a result of blind dispositions, like those of animals.

But we can also read Kant in a way that brings him closer to Hume while still doing justice to the rule-governed character of our reproductive associations. For the claim that our activity of imagination is governed by rules does not necessarily imply that our activity must be guided by those rules. Nor does it imply that the activity cannot be, as on Hume's view, the expression of natural dispositions of the kind that are shared by animals. On the reading that I am proposing, the activity of reproductive synthesis, like the association of ideas for Hume, is simply something that we are naturally disposed to do. It is a natural psychological fact about human beings that, if shown a certain number of trees, they will develop a disposition such that the perception of one tree will tend to call to mind other previously perceived trees. What makes the corresponding associations rule-governed is not that they are guided by a specific, antecedently grasped rule, but rather the fact that we take them to have normative significance. The associations are rule-governed because in carrying them out I take myself to be doing not only what I am disposed to do, but also what I (and everyone else) ought to do. That is, I take my actual

associations, blindly habitual though they are, to manifest conformity to a normative standard applicable to everyone. The rule-governedness of my associations is thus a function of my taking them to be rule-governed, which is in turn a function of my taking my natural dispositions as exemplifying a universally valid norm.

Part of the appeal of this reading is that it offers an answer to the question that remained unsolved at the end of Section I. That was the question of how to account for our possession of the rules governing the synthesis of the manifold, in particular those rules identifiable with – or at least corresponding to – empirical concepts. Seeing something as a tree requires that we synthesize the manifold according to a certain rule corresponding to the concept *tree*. But how could we come to grasp such a rule antecedently to an experience in which we see something as a tree? The difficulty here dissolves if we reject the assumption that the rule must be grasped antecedently to the experience, and more specifically to the synthesis that makes the experience possible. Once this assumption is rejected, we do not need to explain how the rule can be acquired antecedently to the synthesis. Instead, we can say that the rule is acquired insofar as the subject acquires the disposition that makes the relevant kind of synthesis possible. I acquire the rule *tree*, and hence become capable of seeing things as trees, by acquiring the disposition to associate different representations of trees with one another and, more specifically, to reproduce past perceptions of trees when a particular tree is presented to me.²¹ But this is possible only because I take a certain attitude toward the disposition, namely, that the associations I am disposed to carry out in accordance with the disposition conform to a normative standard that is universally valid. It is only because I regard my actual associations as expressing how I (and everyone else) ought to associate representations that my coming to be disposed to associate representations in that way amounts to the acquisition of a rule according to which they ought to be associated.

²¹ This is somewhat oversimplified. For one thing, it applies only insofar as concepts are observational. To the extent that a concept is theoretical, possession of that concept, even in a minimal sense, will require more of a capacity to articulate criteria. Second, depending on the context, we might invoke more or less stringent requirements for concept possession: For example, we might say that a child has the concepts of *solid*, *liquid*, and *gas* if she can reliably sort things into the appropriate categories while imposing more demanding requirements on a student of advanced chemistry.

IV

In the previous section, I suggested that we view Kant's account of empirical generality as a modification of the dispositionalist view I ascribed to Hume. Grasping an empirical concept involves, as on Hume's account, the possession of a disposition to associate one's representations in certain determinate ways; but it also involves taking one's associations to be as they ought to be, that is, to manifest conformity to normative standards. Reading Kant in this way helps us to see how his identification of empirical concepts with rules for synthesis can serve as an answer to the problem of empirical generality. For it suggests that this identification need not require the possession of concepts prior to synthesis, but merely that the subject be capable of regarding her activity of synthesis in normative terms. However, this reading rests on a philosophical presupposition that is likely to strike readers as problematic. My reading is based on the suggestion that we can account for a subject's grasp of a rule in terms of her adopting a normative attitude toward her mental activity. This suggestion presupposes that we can make sense of her as adopting this normative attitude without in turn assuming that she grasps a specific rule to which her mental activity is subject. But it might be protested that this is impossible. How can I take an association of ideas to be appropriate if I don't antecedently have in mind some specific rule with which it accords? For example, how can I take my association of the idea of linden with the idea of a sycamore to be appropriate if I do not already think of the association as governed by the concept *tree*?

This protest might reflect two different kinds of worry. The first stems from the fact that a single idea, for example the idea of a linden, might be associated on various occasions with ideas of many different kinds of things: ideas of lindens, of other deciduous trees, of other trees more generally, of living things, and so on. Given this, it might seem that recalling the idea of a sycamore constitutes an appropriate association only on the assumption that the operative rule is, say, *tree* or *deciduous tree*. In another context, say one in which the linden is presented as an example of its particular species, the association with a sycamore would be inappropriate. Generalizing this first worry, it might seem that, depending on how the context is characterized, any arbitrarily specified association might be made out to be either appropriate or inappropriate. For example, if the linden is presented as an example of something that is wooden, harbors insects, and has no leaves in winter, then the association with the idea of

a house would seem to be appropriate and the association with the idea of spruce would seem to be inappropriate. So it might seem that the view I am suggesting does not avoid the problem of concept acquisition noted in Section I.

However, this worry, at least in its generalized version, overlooks the crucial role I am ascribing to natural dispositions. The account I am suggesting depends on the idea – implicit in Hume – that our capacity to form associative dispositions is limited. As Hume points out in the chapter of the *Treatise* discussed earlier (Book One, I vii), “the idea of an equilateral triangle of an inch perpendicular may serve us in talking of a figure, of a rectilinear figure, of a triangle, and of an equilateral triangle” (20). This is possible because each of the corresponding terms corresponds to a specific disposition: “all these terms,” he says, “excite their particular habits” (ibid.). But it seems clear that the list could not be expanded indefinitely, since there is a limited number of habits that we are naturally inclined to form in connection with the idea Hume describes. Even though the equilateral triangle Hume describes is an instance of the concept *equilateral* or *five-sided* that disjunctive concept does not correspond to a natural disposition: We do not, without special training, form the habit of associating equilateral triangles with, say, irregular pentagons and regular hexagons to the exclusion of oblongs and isosceles triangles. Given this kind of limitation, there is no reason why we cannot say of each of this finite set of habits or dispositions that the corresponding associations are appropriate. It is true that if someone misidentifies a linden as a sycamore because her disposition to associate ideas of various kinds of trees leads her to call to mind the idea of a sycamore when presented with a linden, she is doing something inappropriate, namely making a false claim. But that does not show that the association itself cannot be regarded as appropriate. For the association is just a particular manifestation of the disposition in virtue of which she sees the linden as a tree: and the actualization of that disposition is appropriate no matter what the context.²²

There is, however, a second and more abstract worry that might be raised about the presupposition under discussion, namely that it is incoherent. It might be claimed that it simply does not make sense to suppose

²² It might be objected that the idea of a natural disposition is itself problematic, or at least cannot bear the weight that is being placed on it in this account. I will not try to address this line of objection here, except to say that my appeal to natural dispositions in the context of this account derives some support from Graeme Forbes’s (2002) defense of a dispositionalist account of rule-following.

that we can think of a thing as conforming to a normative standard without first having in mind the idea of a specific rule or standard to which it is antecedently subject. In the present context, the claim would be that the very idea that my mental activity is as it ought to be presupposes the antecedent idea of a rule or concept that dictates how it ought to be. But it is not obvious why this should be so. It seems to me that we do in fact often take our associations to be appropriate without being able to recognize specific respects in virtue of which they are appropriate. Indeed, the possibility of this kind of normative awareness is routinely assumed in introducing children to new concepts. Six-year-olds learn the concepts *solid*, *liquid*, and *gas*, say, by being presented with objects that they are asked to sort into kinds: Does the chalk “belong with” the stone, the bottle of water, or the balloon? This kind of procedure relies not just on the child’s being mechanically disposed to sort objects in a particular way, but also on a primitive appreciation that what she is doing is appropriate: She recognizes that the chalk *should* go with the stone even if she cannot say anything about why it should. What is going on here is not that the child already grasps that the chalk and the stone are solid as opposed to liquid or gaseous, and therefore should be classed together: Rather, the child is inclined to sort the chalk and the stone together, and implicitly takes her inclination to reflect how they ought to be sorted. Her appreciation of the appropriateness of her sorting inclinations – that is to say, of her associative dispositions – does not presuppose possession of the concept *solid*, but it provides the basis on which that concept can be acquired. To the extent that her sorting inclinations in fact lead her to discriminate solids from liquids and gases, her recognition of their appropriateness amounts to a recognition of her activity as both governed by and conforming to a rule: a rule that she can initially specify only by the example of her own activity, but that she will later be in a position to articulate as the concept *solid*.

One might be puzzled here about how a subject can take her activity to be governed by a rule that is, in the first instance, picked out through the example of that very activity. In order for her to take her activity to be governed by a rule, she must be able to make sense of the possibility that what she does might fail to accord with the rule; but how can what she does fail to accord with a rule that is exemplified by her activity itself?²³

²³ This objection has been put to me in terms of Wittgenstein’s remark about a “private language” at *Philosophical Investigations* §258: “One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that just means that here we can’t talk about ‘right.’”

An initial answer is that, while she cannot take what she does at any given time both to exemplify a rule and to fail to accord with that same rule, she can still make sense of the idea of the rule's being contravened, namely by considering the possibility that she might act differently. For she may take it that, if she were to act differently, she would fail to accord with the rule that she now recognizes as governing her activity. She would, as she sees it, be acting wrongly because she would not be acting *this way*. By the same token, she may take others to be failing to accord with the rule now exemplified by her behavior, and she may take herself to have contravened that rule on previous occasions. That is to say, she may take others, and herself on other occasions, to be failing to do as they ought because they are failing to do *as she is doing now*.

This answer might seem inadequate to address the difficulty. For surely, it might be objected, the subject must recognize that, if she were to act differently, she would still be according with a rule exemplified by what she would be doing in that counterfactual situation. Similarly, she must recognize that others who act differently are according with rules that are exemplified by what *they* are doing. So it would seem that she is not in a position to make sense of anyone's ever failing to act as they ought: No matter what others do, she must take them to be doing as they ought in the sense that they are according with a rule exemplified by their own activity. And that undermines the idea that her own activity exemplifies a rule that is universally valid.

But the assumption underlying this objection is mistaken. If a subject takes what she herself does in a certain situation to conform to a rule that it exemplifies, she will not recognize another subject's divergent activity as also conforming to a rule that it exemplifies; rather, she will deny that the other subject's activity exemplifies a rule at all. If, in the context of the kind of sorting exercise I described earlier, Alma sorts the chalk with the stone but sees another child, Bruno, sorting it with the balloon, she will not take it that his behavior is governed by a rule that it exemplifies, because she does not take there to be any rule that prescribes that the chalk ought to be sorted with the balloon. In taking it that she is sorting the objects as they ought to be sorted, and thus as anyone ought to sort them, she excludes the possibility that someone who is presented with the same objects, but who sorts them differently, is also doing as he ought. She will thus take Bruno to be failing to do as he ought, either in the sense that there is no "ought" applicable to his behavior at all (she may think that he has opted out of the exercise and is engaged in random play) or in the sense that he has violated the rule that does govern his behavior,

namely the rule exemplified by her own sorting activity. Whether or not she takes his activity to be rule-governed at all, it does not, by her lights, exemplify a rule.

It might seem problematic here that Alma has no criterion for determining that it is Bruno rather than herself who is mistaken in taking his activity to exemplify a rule, and hence Bruno rather than herself who must be counted as failing to do as he or she ought. For it is equally open to Bruno to take what he does to exemplify a rule for sorting the objects in question, and hence to deny that Alma's sorting activity exemplifies a rule. We seem to be faced with the possibility of multiple subjects sorting objects or associating representations in different ways, each taking her own activity to exemplify a rule, and none in a position to establish the legitimacy of her claim against those of the others. So how can any one subject, recognizing that possibility, take her own sorting or associative activity to be as it ought to be? Lacking a criterion, she seems to be in no position to defend her claim in the face of disagreement from others, and that seems to undermine the intelligibility of her claim to be doing as she ought in the first place.

One part of my response here is simply to deny that the absence of a criterion of correctness undermines the possibility of a subject's intelligibly taking herself to be doing as she ought. Two subjects can genuinely disagree about what is appropriate in a given case – and hence make conflicting claims about which one is mistaken in taking his or her activity to exemplify a rule – without a criterion's being available to resolve that disagreement. But the other part of the response is to draw attention once again to the role played in my account by the idea of natural dispositions and, in particular, the idea of such dispositions as shared. For the most part, human beings naturally converge in the ways they are inclined to sort objects and, correspondingly, to associate representations: If they did not, we could never come to attach a common meaning to words like 'tree' and 'solid.' So disagreements like that between Alma and Bruno rarely arise, and, if they do, they tend to be quickly resolved. With further exposure to examples and other kinds of training, Bruno's sorting dispositions will naturally come into line with Alma's and ours, so that he will come to agree with Alma that his earlier sorting behavior failed to be as it ought to be. The point here is not that a subject can use the idea of "what comes naturally" as a criterion for determining whether or not she is associating her representations as she ought. Rather, it is that we all naturally tend to associate our representations in the same ways, so that the need for such a criterion does not arise. The fact of our shared

natural dispositions enables us to agree on which rules are exemplified by our activity overall, and hence on a shared set of concepts.

I have been defending the possibility of a subject's adopting a normative attitude to her mental activity without any antecedent grasp of a concept or rule determining how that activity ought to be. But could Kant allow such a possibility? The answer is that he not only could but does, and this brings us back to the central thesis of the essay. For his account of judgments of beauty in the *Critique of Judgment* explicitly relies on the idea that we can conceive of our mental activity to be as it ought to be without conceiving it as governed by a specific rule or concept.²⁴ As I noted at the beginning of the essay, a judgment of beauty makes a claim to universal validity. In taking something to be beautiful, I take it that everyone ought to judge it in the same way that I do. But judgments of beauty have a further feature that at first sight seems to stand in conflict with their universal validity. They are what Kant calls "subjectively grounded": Instead of ascribing an objective feature to the thing, as a cognitive judgment would do, they reflect the subject's own response to the object, a response that consists, more specifically, in a certain activity of the subject's imagination. So in making a judgment of beauty, I take it that everyone ought to respond imaginatively to the object as I do. But I do so without ascribing to the object a feature in virtue of which that response is universally called for, and hence without taking the appropriateness of my imaginative activity to depend on its conformity to an antecedently specified rule. A subject who judges an object to be beautiful thus takes her mental activity to be appropriate in the primitive way that I have described: In Kant's words, she sees her judgment as "the example of a universal rule which cannot be stated [*die man nicht angeben kann*]" (*Critique of Judgment* §18, 237).

While I do not have space to go into the many complications of Kant's account of judgments of beauty, I want at least to note that Kant's treatment of them indicates his acceptance of the kind of normative attitude under consideration. For Kant holds that such judgments are both intelligible and in principle legitimate. The mere fact that we make judgments of beauty shows that we do, under certain circumstances, take ourselves to respond appropriately to objects, but without taking ourselves

²⁴ For a fuller discussion of this point, see Ginsborg (1997a), especially Section IV, and Ginsborg (1997b), especially Section V. In those articles I make a distinction between primitive and derivative ascriptions of normativity, which is intended to address worries of the kind discussed earlier.

to conform, in so responding, to a specific rule or standard governing the perception of the object. Moreover, he argues, we are entitled to so. As long as my pleasure in an object is disinterested, which he takes as implying that it does not depend on any “private condition” that sets me apart from other human beings (*Critique of the Power of Judgment* §6, 5:211), we are entitled to claim that all other human beings ought to respond to the object in the same way that we do. I take this to suggest, in the first place, that Kant himself wants to make room for the possibility of normative claims that do not presuppose specific rules. In the second place, albeit more speculatively, I take it to point to precisely the kind of move embodied in what I have called Kant’s ‘normative twist’ on Hume. For our entitlement to make judgments of beauty appears to depend on our being entitled to take a normative attitude toward our mental activity more generally. As long as my mental activity is not influenced by any factors that set me apart from other human beings, Kant appears to suggest, then I can legitimately take it as representing a standard that all human beings, myself included, ought to meet. And if that is so, then to the extent that my dispositions to associate representations are independent of my desires and of other contingent features of my psychology, I can take them as exemplifying normative rules that apply to all human beings.²⁵

²⁵ This talk of “entitlement” may suggest a further, and still more general, worry about the view I am ascribing to Kant. Suppose that I am right to interpret Kant as holding that we regard our mental activity as exemplifying normative rules and that this accounts for the possibility of grasping empirical concepts. This does not in itself seem to show that we are entitled to take this normative attitude toward our mental activity. We are thus left with the question of how we can *legitimately* take our mental activity to exemplify normative rules, regardless of whether or not we actually do so as a matter of psychological fact. But this question can be answered, I think, by appeal precisely to the dependence of our grasp of empirical concepts on our adoption of this normative attitude. In other words, we are entitled to regard our mental activity as exemplifying normative rules precisely in virtue of the fact that our doing so is a condition of the possibility of empirical concepts, and hence of cognition more generally. I find at least a hint of this answer at §21 of the *Critique of Judgment* where Kant says that cognitions and judgments “must . . . allow of being universally communicated . . . for otherwise they would be altogether a merely subjective play of the powers of representation, just as skepticism demands” (5:238) and that the “universal communicability of our cognition must be assumed in every logic and every principle of cognition that is not skeptical (5:239). The point can be made vivid by asking what it would be for this normative attitude to fail to be legitimate. In the case of specific concepts whose legitimacy might be called into question, in particular the pure concepts of the understanding, we can make sense of the idea that we are not entitled to use them: Experience might fail to present us with objects to which they apply. It is the task of the Transcendental Deduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason* to rule out that possibility. But the general principle that we are entitled to take a normative attitude

We are now in a position to see the connection between the two senses of “universal” invoked at the beginning of this essay. When Kant characterizes judgment as the “capacity to think the particular as contained under the universal,” he means to refer, at least in part, to the capacity to think particular objects under empirical concepts. But if the view I have attributed to him is correct, he takes this capacity to require that we be able to think the particular under the universal in another sense, namely, that of being able to regard certain of our psychological responses to objects as universally valid. This suggests that the most fundamental characterization of judgment should not be as a capacity to think objects under concepts, as suggested by the first sense of “universal,” but as a capacity to regard one’s mental responses to objects in normative terms, as suggested by the second sense. For it is only by virtue of taking a normative attitude to one’s mental activity that one can regard it as governed by rules, which in turn is required for recognizing the objects we perceive as falling under empirical concepts.²⁶

toward our mental activity does not purport to be an objective principle, so it does not make sense to suppose that objects could fail to accord with it. Any attempt to show that it is not legitimate would itself have to appeal to a normative principle governing our mental activity and would thus be self-defeating. The point here is related to Kant’s claim that the deduction of taste (which, as I understand it, rests on the general principle under discussion) is “easy, because it does not have to justify any objective reality of a concept” (*Critique of the Power of Judgment* §38, 5:290).

²⁶ Earlier versions of this essay were given at the 2002 France–Berkeley Conference on Kant and Normativity and at the University of Chicago. I am grateful to members of the audiences on those occasions for comments and discussion, and in particular to Janet Broughton, James Conant, John Haugeland, John MacFarlane, and Charles Travis. The essay benefited also from discussions with Janet Broughton, Quassim Cassam, Alva Noë, Seana Shiffrin, and Jay Wallace, and from Rebecca Kukla’s valuable substantive and editorial comments.

The Necessity of Receptivity

Exploring a Unified Account of Kantian Sensibility and Understanding

Richard N. Manning

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant attempted to explain just how the sensible matter provided by intuition contributes to the content and grounding of empirical judgment. But many commentators, both Kant's contemporaries and ours, have found his answer ultimately unsatisfactory, and have laid blame on his apparently fundamental distinction between sensibility (the receptive faculty of intuition) and understanding (the spontaneous faculty of concepts). For example, Reinhold (1789)¹ found the distinction and the dualisms it engenders so problematic that he proposed that the idea of representation, common to both sensibility and understanding, should supplant it as an ultimate grounding principle for transcendental idealism. And Davidson's famous rejection of the very idea of a conceptual scheme (Davidson 1984) is targeted at the distinction between conceptual and experiential elements in thought, which he takes Kant's distinction to entail (Davidson 1999, 51). But perhaps the commentators have been wrong, not in finding fault with the idea that these faculties and their contributions to experience and judgment are fundamentally distinct, but in attributing that idea to Kant. In this essay, I explore this theme. I shall first illuminate the difficulties for Kant's account as typically understood, from the standpoint of the question of how sensibility could possibly provide the sort of grounding or guidance for the understanding's operations that could ever yield objective empirical judgment.² I shall then turn to John McDowell's recent effort

¹ The legitimacy of Reinhold's complaint is discussed and debated in Ameriks (2000) and Larmore (2003).

² In so framing the matter, I take the lead from the early chapters of Sellars (1992).

to overcome these worries. McDowell's approach is to attribute to Kant, contrary to the standard view, an originally unified view of sensibility and understanding. As I shall endeavor to show, such a unified view, whether or not it captures Kant's actual view, faces a threat of idealism, which Kant himself took very seriously and which, despite repeated efforts, he was never fully satisfied that he refuted.

1. THE STRUCTURE OF KANTIAN COGNITION AND THE PROBLEM OF GUIDANCE

Kant says, "In whatever way, and through whatever means a cognition may relate to objects, that through which it relates immediately to them . . . is intuition. This, however, takes place only insofar as the object is given to us; but this, in turn, is possible only if it affects us in a certain way" (A 19, B33).³ Intuition is thus essentially a mode of receptivity. Our specific and exclusive mode of being affected by objects in intuition is sensibility. Kant defines the understanding negatively as a nonsensible faculty of cognition, and positively as the faculty of concepts. Since sensibility alone rests on affections, the understanding is a spontaneous rather than a passive or receptive faculty. Concepts are rules for the classification of representations and are thus essentially general in relation to what they classify. Intuitions, in contrast, are themselves wholly particular in the sense that they cannot be multiply instantiated.⁴ Though distinct, each of these two faculties is essential to all cognition. "Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding none would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (A51/B75). By 'content' here, Kant means the sensible matter provided in intuition.

But how can these two essential elements of cognition ever come together in a way that could yield objective empirical judgments? Such judgments – subsumptions of intuitive representations under concepts – amount to commitments directed toward objects in a world that is not of our making and are answerable for their correctness to the way that those objects are. If our judgments are to be in this way answerable to objects, it seems they must be in some way guided or constrained by the character of

³ All parenthetical citations are to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ This crucial distinction between intuitions and concepts is indicated by the fact that Kant proves that space is not a concept – which is not to say that we have no concept of space – on the ground that it is not multiply instantiable (all spaces being a part of space rather than instances of distinct spaces).

our relation to those objects. Yet the sole basis for our relation to them is through their effect on our sensibility in intuition, and sensible intuition is itself blind. How could a blind sensible intuition provide such guiding constraint?

Kant is, of course, well aware of the *prima facie* problem he faces in bringing together the sheer receptivity of intuition with the spontaneity of the understanding in a way that could yield objective empirical judgment. Indeed, this is the central problem of the first *Critique's* Analytic of Principles. There, Kant describes two mental functions – the synthesis of the imagination and schematization of concepts – in trying to bridge the apparent gap between sensible intuition and understanding.

Synthesis is “the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition” (A77/B103). While “the manifold of representations can be given in an intuition that is merely sensible, i.e., nothing but receptivity,” “the combination (conjunction) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses” (B129). Mere intuition, while it “provides a manifold,” can never give unity “without the occurrence of synthesis,” which “runs through and takes together this manifoldness” (A99). This allows the manifold contained in an intuition to be apprehended as such, that is, as a manifold, and is a condition on the possibility of cognition (A78–9/B104). Kant refers to the synthesis as “a blind but indispensable function of the soul” (A78 B103).

Kant attributes the synthesis of the manifold of specifically *sensible* intuition, which he calls the “figurative synthesis,” to the imagination, which, he claims, belongs to sensibility insofar as it is concerned with intuition (B151). But he makes clear nonetheless that imaginative synthesis belongs more appropriately to spontaneity. Imagination is a determining, and not merely determinable, faculty and it is therefore allied to understanding (B151–2). Synthesis “is an act of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination . . . is an action of the understanding” (B130). The synthesis of intuition by imagination “is an effect of the *understanding* on sensibility” (B152, emphasis added). So far as it is spontaneous, Kant calls the synthesis of the imaginative “productive.”

In light of the operation of productive synthesis, “we can represent nothing as combined in the object without having previously combined it ourselves . . . among all representations, combination is the only one that is not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself” (B129–30). Now since our sole mode of affection by objects is

through this sensible manifold, and since particulars are present in the intuition of the manifold only through the operation of the synthesis of imagination, particulars, as such, are not present in the manifold of intuition at all.

The problem of guidance gains purchase at the initial moment of the cognitive process: the transition from mere sensation to intuited appearance. All appearance already involves not mere receptivity, but the ordering and placing of that matter of sensation in relation, according to space and time, the *a priori* forms of intuition (A19–21/B33–5). Sensation, as the effect of the object on us, cannot be present to us spatiotemporally independent of the activity of our mental faculties. How then can sheer sensory content, which is not itself spatiotemporally arrayed, determine the spatiotemporal structure of its appearance? The determinate character of the sort that might conceivably provide guidance to or constrain the way the manifold is taken up as a manifold seems to be the product of synthesis. Yet guidance from the contents of the sensible manifold *itself* seems required if synthesis is to be a part of a process that yields objective understanding of objects sensed.⁵

The chapter on the schematism of concepts in the *Analytic of Principles* arguably presents the next stage in the progress from sheer receptivity of the sensible manifold to full, spontaneous concept application in empirical judgment. There, Kant tells us that in all applications of concepts to objects, the representation of the object must be “homogeneous” with the concept, in the sense that “the concept must contain that which is represented in the object” (A137/B176). The pure concepts, he says, are “entirely unhomogeneous” in comparison with empirical intuitions. While some of what Kant says suggests that schemata are required only for the application of pure concepts, it is nonetheless clear that schemata are required for the application of empirical concepts as well. Noting that no image could be adequate to the pure concept of a triangle precisely because images are particular in a way that the concept is not, Kant concludes that what is required is the schema of a triangle, which “signifies a rule of the synthesis of the imagination” (A141/B180). He then insists that “even less does an object of experience [an appearance] or an image of it ever reach the empirical concept, rather the latter is always related immediately to the schema of the imagination as a rule for the determination of our intuition in accordance with a certain general concept” (A141/B180).

⁵ Indeed, sheer sensibility does not even provide an *occasion* for synthesis, since occasions are in time, and the temporal character of intuition is itself a product of synthesis.

The process of schematization is, Kant says, “a hidden art in the depths of the human soul” (A141/B180–1). “The schema of sensible concepts,” he continues, “is a product, and as it were a monogram of pure a priori imagination, through which and in accordance with which the images first become possible, but which must be connected with the concept, to which they are never themselves fully congruent, always only by means of the schema they designate” (A141–2/B181). So schemata are representations of general procedures, and either are or signify rules that make possible the subsumption of images under concepts. Images themselves cannot make this possible, since they cannot “attain the generality” of concepts. Since, in Kant’s view, schemata can make this possible, they evidently do attain to that generality. And Kant indeed identifies schematism as “a procedure of the *understanding*” (A140/B179, emphasis added), the faculty of concepts. But it is this very generality of concepts that indicated the need for an intermediary between concepts and intuited objects in the first place.⁶ Schemata seem to be general in just the same way that concepts are, hence equally heterogeneous with objects on this score, and equally in need of additional terms through which they can relate to them. In this way, schemata seem to be – like third men in the Platonic context – too much like the very elements between which they are supposed to mediate to pull off the task.

To take stock, the situation appears to be this: Kant recognizes a moment of sheer receptivity in our cognition, which moment is crucial to our being able to think of objects at all. However, in order for receptivity to be able to provide us with objects for thought, the received sensible manifold must be worked over by the imagination through synthesis to yield discrete, re-identifiable particulars as contents of sensory representation, which can then be related to concepts through schemata. But what warrants the claim that the matter of sheer receptivity has guided, or so much as constrained, the formation of such contents, and hence the formation and character of the schemata bringing them to conceptualization? And if this claim is unwarranted, then we seem likewise unwarranted to claim that judgment can amount to an objective response to our receptivity. In both synthesis and schematization, all the guiding work seems to be done by the operation of spontaneity. In each case, the product seems to owe all of its character (if not its existence), insofar as that character

⁶ See here the introduction to the second book of the *Analytic*, where Kant argues that judgment cannot be a matter of mere rule application, on pain of infinite regress (A133/B172). This regress initiates the need for a specifically transcendental logic designed to link understanding, as a faculty of rules, to judgment as the faculty of subsuming something under rules.

is relevant to its subsumption under concepts in judgment, to the faculty of concepts. Sheer presynthesized sensibility is too unstructured, as Kant seems to conceive it, to guide the operations of spontaneity at all. It cannot have a voice in the outcome of synthesis, namely schematization, and, consequently, judgment, for it is dumb as well as blind. Since concepts without intuitions are empty, and since intuition seems to have no voice in concept application, we seem to be forced to admit that our concepts, and hence our thoughts, are after all empty, of nothing, hence not even possibly right or wrong.

2. REJECTING SHEER SENSIBILITY: UNIFYING INTUITION AND UNDERSTANDING

Apparently, we must reject the idea of sheer unstructured sensibility. In his *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes*, Wilfrid Sellars (1992) argues that Kant equivocated between two senses of ‘intuition’: When he appeals to intuitions in satisfying empiricist and anti-idealist demands for input from a world not of our making, he conceives them as sheer receptivity, and when he appeals to them to explain the legitimacy of the application of concepts whose ground is in the understanding, he conceives them as the postsynthetic presentation of (at least proto-conceptually structured) spatiotemporal particulars. But the former sort of intuitions could not possibly guide the synthesis of the latter. Sellars contends that Kant should have conceived sheer receptivity in terms of nonconceptual impressions that possess properties analogous to those of the objects whose conceptualization they guide. These states and their properties are in the nature of theoretical, explanatory posits that, because their properties are conceived on analogy with those of empirical objects, explain the structure of our perceptions of these.

While Sellars intends his suggestion as a correction rather than an interpretation of Kant, he does think that Kant was correct in recognizing the need for guidance from some form of receptivity that is sheer in being utterly prior to and independent of the operations of the faculty of concepts. John McDowell (1998 – hereafter “HWV”), in response to both the Kantian problematic as Sellars formulates it and his dissatisfaction with Sellars’s correction, has denied that this need for sheer sensibility is genuine or that Kant believed it was. Recognizing the hopelessness of trying to bridge any notion of intuition as sheer nonconceptual receptivity with understanding, McDowell claims that, despite appearances,⁷ “the

⁷ Pun intended.

idea that perception involves a flow of conceptual representations guided by manifolds of ‘sheer receptivity’ is not Kantian at all” (HWV 452). On McDowell’s reading of the first *Critique*, Kantian intuitions themselves are “shapings of sensory consciousness by the understanding” (HWV 462). Kant’s insight, he claims, is that “the very idea of a conceptual repertoire is the idea of a system of capacities that allows, as it were at the ground level, for actualizations in which objects are immediately present to the subject” (HWV 463). By ‘objects’ here, McDowell does not mean some kind of sensible particulars that demand further shaping by the understanding to be actualized as empirical objects, but full-on empirical objects themselves. Thus these shapings of sensory consciousness involve the very same capacities of the understanding that are in play in the full, spontaneous act of judgment. The contribution sensibility makes to experience and judgment is not even notionally separable from the spontaneity of the understanding as the faculty of concepts.

This reading obviously represents a radical shift from the conception of the interplay between sensibility and understanding as I have sketched it in this essay so far. And it alters it in a way that makes the problematic I have exposed appear illusory. For if there are no sheer manifolds given in intuition, then it makes no sense to demand that such sheer manifolds provide guidance in the application of concepts. If what is ‘given’ in intuition is already conceptually structured, then the notion that an application of concepts to it in full, spontaneous judgment might be correct or incorrect seems to require no further defense. Assuming that it can sustain criticism, then, McDowell’s reading of Kant is tempting.

3. THE UNIFIED ACCOUNT: IS IT KANTIAN?

As a straightforward reading of the text of the first *Critique*, McDowell’s interpretation is hard to accept. McDowell himself places his greatest reliance on the “clue” in the Metaphysical Deduction, where Kant says that “the same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition” (A79/B104–5). Judgment just is the unification of representations under concepts, so if the same function is at play in intuition, it too should involve the unity of representations under concepts. This is a potent passage for supporting the claim that there is a sense of intuition in Kant corresponding to the sense that McDowell invokes. But this would support McDowell’s reading as a whole only if it were clear that Kant uses the term ‘intuition’ univocally, and there is, as Sellars points out, reason to think he does not. Consider again the passage I

cited earlier from the B Deduction, where Kant says, “the manifold of representations can be given in an intuition that is merely sensible, i.e., nothing but receptivity, and the form of this intuition can lie a priori in the faculty of representation without being anything other than the way in which the subject is affected” (B129–30). Here we have a form of intuition in which there has as yet been no operation whatever of our synthetic faculties. Kant continues: “the combination (*conjunctio*) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and therefore cannot already be contained in the pure form of sensible intuition” (B129–30). This too suggests that some intuition is of the pure form. On the other hand, combination, “whether we are conscious of it or not, whether it is the combination of the manifold of intuition or of several concepts . . . is an action of the understanding” (B130). Here we see that the intuition of a manifold – as opposed to the manifold of intuition – is a result of the function of the synthetic operation of the understanding, just as is the unity of a judgment. This is intuition in McDowell’s sense. But Kant is directly contrasting such synthesized intuition, which “is not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself” (B129–30), with the manifold of representations given through objects in a merely sensible intuition. The latter appears to be the sheer sort of intuition that McDowell would read out of Kant. In light of this apparent equivocation, the “clue” can’t be thought decisive, since it may concern only intuition in the postsynthetic sense.

McDowell’s reading does more than excise an apparently Kantian sense of intuition. It also appears to make otiose those of Kant’s discussions that seem to concern the transition from the sheer manifold of sensible intuition to the intuition of a manifold, and from this to the full empirical judgment. If McDowell is right, then, for example, it would seem that when Kant says that “the first thing that must be given to us a priori for the cognition of objects is the manifold of pure intuition; the synthesis of this manifold by means of the imagination is the second thing” (A78–9/B104), he both mistakes his own view of what is given in intuition and unnecessarily posits a synthetic process operating on what is given to deal with it. Moreover, if the yield of synthesis is conceptual particulars, as it seems to be on McDowell’s reading, then there should be no need for schemata to bridge a gap between concepts and sensible contents; they would already be homogeneous in the way Kant, as standardly read, claims they are not.

If McDowell is right, then either these discussions are altogether otiose or they play a quite different role than they are usually taken to play.

On the other hand, we have seen that those discussions are of dubious success when so understood. Perhaps, then, we are better off reading passages of the first *Critique* involving sheer intuition and the processes that seem designed to deal with it as missteps on Kant's part, reflecting a bit of confusion, perhaps, but not his considered view. Part of interpreting a thinker as deep and rich as Kant is trying to make the philosophy that results from the interpretation as coherent and plausible as possible. And in fairness both to McDowell and to Kant, one must concede that it is utterly unlikely that a successful philosophy can emerge from a reading of the first *Critique* that is straightforward in the sense of preserving the evident content of each aspect of the text. Any reading, like McDowell's, that avoids the embarrassments of apparently unguided synthesis and the third man of the schematism has something going for it. But is the resulting attempt to read Kant charitably itself philosophically promising?

4. ASSESSING THE UNIFIED ACCOUNT: THE AESTHETIC CHARACTER OF EXPERIENCE

Sensible experience has a sensuous, qualitative character that the mere conception of objects, on the face of it, seems to lack. There is something it is visually like to have or undergo a sensible visual intuition, and something it is audibly like to have or undergo a sensible auditory intuition; but there is nothing it is visually like to think of a visible object, even as visible, and nothing it is auditorily like to think of an audible object, even as audible. Can the unified reading preserve this crucial distinction? Another way of putting this is to ask whether, in imputing specifically conceptual actualizations in intuition, the unified reading actually transforms intuition into intellection. This is clearly not McDowell's intent. His reading is precisely one of *sensible* intuition. McDowell insists that "the actualizations of conceptual capacities that we are focusing on . . . are shapings of *sensory* consciousness" (HWV 473, emphasis in the original). But given that the very same conceptual capacities *can* be actualized in a merely intellectual representation, we are entitled to ask what, on his view, accounts for the great phenomenological difference between these kinds of cognition. Of course, if there were some sheer sensory matter to be given form by an actualization of conceptual capacities, it might account for the specifically sensuous character of sensible representations. But this is what the unified view denies. And without that sheer sensible matter, it seems question begging, if not entirely empty words, merely to insist

that it is *sensory* consciousness that is shaped by conceptual actualizations in perception.

This brings us to our second phenomenological reason for insisting on a sharp distinction between a sensible and an intellectual faculty. The contents of perception, unlike the contents of mere thought, seem to be inexhaustibly rich and concrete, whereas concepts seem always to blur differences among the concreta of perception. If we concede that the perception of an object always contains more than what can be discursively thought of it, it seems we will have to recognize that there is content to sensibility that goes beyond what could be accounted for by the shaping of sensory consciousness by conceptual capacities. And we will be forced to acknowledge that intuitions are not simply actualizations of conceptual capacities, as the unified account insists.

But I think the unified view can avoid this apparent problem by refusing to make the concession.⁸ Perception does not contain more than can be accounted for by actualizations of concepts, since we can denote any sensible aspect of a perception demonstratively, as when we focus on *that shade of red* or on *that timbre of sound*. A conceptual capacity is a rule for classifying representations. So if we have the ability to classify numerically diverse representations as being of *that (same) shade of red* or *that (same) timbre of sound*, then we can say that we possess these as concepts. And then we can say that the perception of some object that is that shade of red, or of some sound of that timbre, involves an actualization of those concepts. So long, then, as perception does not contain elements that are beyond our capacity to *demonstrate*, in a way that permits us to classify other sensible particulars as alike in the respect demonstrated, perception does not, despite its inexhaustible richness, outstrip our concepts or contain anything that cannot be explicated as an actualization of them. This hardly amounts to an argument for the claim that every aspect of sensible intuition can be classified conceptually, but it does suggest that every discriminable aspect of it can be so classified in principle. So the claim that the contents of perception outstrip our conceptual capacities will have to rest on the claim that contents of perception outstrip our discriminative capacities – that it contains variety that cannot be discriminated. And it is hard to see how there could be evidence for such a claim, since any variety we might find or mention would be discriminated in the process.

⁸ While the issue does not arise as such in HWV, it does come up in *Mind and World* (McDowell 1994), where he takes much the same line as the one I discuss here.

This strategy helps with our first problem – that of the sensuousness of intuition – as well. For demonstrative concepts of this sensible sort seem precisely to be concepts the possession of which is essentially dependent upon the actualization of specifically sensory modalities. The specifically sensory character of perception would then be accounted for by the fact that it involves primary actualizations of these sorts of concepts; the sensuous character of experience, far from being extra to mere concept actualization, would flow from the fact that we possess specifically sense-involving concepts of this sort.

5. ASSESSING THE UNIFIED ACCOUNT: OBJECTIVITY

The objectivity of judgments seems at a minimum to entail their answerability to a world that is not a mere projection of our thinking. The world must stand over against thought as an independent tribunal. In order to secure this objectivity, any account of cognition must provide grounds for supposing both that there is a world that is independent of our thoughts about it, and that it is the way this world is that constitutes the tribunal to which our thinking is answerable. Call the first aspect of this demand the ‘independence’ of the world and the second the ‘answerability’ of our thinking. On a standard reading of Kant, the sheer receptivity of intuition of the sensible manifold provides the moment of immediate encounter with the world about which we think, grounding the claim that our thinking is responsive to a world that is independent of our thinking in the sense that (with obvious exceptions for psychological facts, etc.) it is as it is, regardless of how we think it to be, or indeed whether or not we think about it at all. Since, on that view, all subsequent synthesis of that manifold and ensuing judgment of the resulting unities is in some way guided by what is thus passively received, such judgment is answerable to the world as well. But we have seen how problematic that standard picture is. Our attention to this point has been largely focused on the question of answerability. In treating the contents of sensibility itself as always already conceptually structured, McDowell’s unified view makes plain how the application of concepts to these contents in judgment can be correct or incorrect, and thus addresses this question. But McDowell also takes his account to have done justice to the need for independence. He takes himself to be engaged precisely in the transcendental project of “entitling ourselves to see conceptual activity as directed toward a reality that is not a mere reflection of it” (HWV 473). In order to earn this entitlement, we must see the contents of perceptual states as “making claims”

on us, and we must avoid the implication that those claims are actually made *by* us. But it is easy to see how the unified view's solution to the problem of answerability threatens this entitlement, and with it the idea of independence. For if we reject the idea of the sheer sensible manifold as the guiding origin of those claims, conceding that all intuition is the actualization of functions of spontaneity, how are we to resist the conclusion that the contents of intuition – the claims it makes on us – are entirely owing to the spontaneous acts of our thinking?

McDowell is well aware of this threat of idealism, and his answer to it is to insist on the adequacy of a minimal empiricism: So long as there is receptivity in addition to spontaneity, we have all the assurance of objectivity we could demand. Says McDowell, "if we conceive subjects as receptive with respect to objects, then, whatever else we suppose to be true of such subjects, it cannot undermine our entitlement to the thought that the objects stand over against them, independently there for them" (HWV 470; the same thought is expressed on 473). Now whether or not the satisfaction of this minimal demand for receptivity would suffice to dispel idealist worries is an important and difficult question. But rather than address it directly, I want to ask whether the proponent of the unified view would be entitled to claim that his conception of intuition meets even this minimal demand for receptivity. What remains of receptivity when we insist that all intuition involves the actualization of conceptual capacities? McDowell emphasizes the specifically sensible character of receptive intuition: "Objects come into view for us . . . in sensory consciousness, and Kant perfectly naturally connects sensibility with receptivity" (HWV 470). Elsewhere, McDowell insists on the "obvious appropriateness" of associating the sensory and receptivity (HWV 473). The connection does indeed seem *natural*. Given that he recognizes sheer intuition, Kant can perhaps exploit this natural connection. Nothing in his positive account of the sensible manifold itself calls it into doubt. But the question is whether, on McDowell's view of intuition as unified with understanding, we remain entitled to exploit this natural connection. Intuitions are conceptual actualizations of *sensory* consciousness, but that is not to be thought of as a meeting place where matter we receive from without is operated on by spontaneity. What then cements the natural connection between sensibility and receptivity on the unified account?

McDowell's own answer seems to be that sensibility, despite being the actualization of the spontaneous faculty of concepts, is not fully active the way that deliberate judgment is. Perception, as opposed to spontaneous acts of judgment, is passive. In perception, we are *saddled* with

conceptual contents: “It does not take cognitive work for objects to come into view for us. Mere synthesis just happens; it is not our doing, unlike making judgments, deciding what to think about something” (HWV 462). Perceptions, says McDowell, contain their claims “as ostensibly necessitated by an object” (HWV 440). But this appeal to the phenomenology of how experience seems to come to us is too thin a thread to support the weighty demand for genuine receptivity. There is indeed a real difference between states resulting from considered reflection, inference, and judgment and those with which we are saddled – those over whose occurrence we have had no control. And there is also a real difference between states produced by the operations of our cognitive faculties and those, if any, that represent the deliverances from outside of us. But we are not entitled simply to equate the two differences. On the one hand, sometimes we must work very hard indeed to perceive something, as when we squint, crane our necks, or what have you. What and when we perceive is in some sense in our control, and does not merely come over us without our cooperation and effort. On the other hand, as we saw earlier, Kant attributes to spontaneity a host of cognitive processes whose operations are neither deliberate nor in anything like our conscious control. Synthesis, the very thing McDowell says “just happens” without our doing, is for Kant attributed to operations of the understanding, despite its being a “blind art,” rarely if ever conscious; we no more decide on the outcome of imaginative synthesis than we do on the outcome of peering out the window. And recall that schematization, also allied with understanding, “is a hidden art within the depths of the human soul” (A141/B180–1). It is also surely the case that some judgments are as much compulsory, and as little a matter of self-conscious deliberation or decision, as are perceptions. Perception saddles us not just with experience, but also with beliefs. And some inferences are inescapable; the force of an argument can compel acceptance of its conclusion without our seeming to make any kind of reflective decision about it. For these reasons, the contrast between receptivity and spontaneity simply does not parallel that between operations over which we have or experience deliberate control and those over which we do not.

One way to resist this running together of the way we are saddled with perceptions with the way some judgments can be inescapable would be to invoke a very Kantian distinction between kinds of compulsion: the force of reason and the compulsion of natural causation. Reasons may compel, and such compulsion is consistent with freedom; but we are passive with respect to the force of natural causes. So perhaps the way to

insist on the robust receptivity of actualizations of sensory consciousness is to hold that they come on us with something like the latter brutally natural kind of force, whereas deliberative judgment, however inescapable its conclusions, compels us with the former force of reason. This suggestion has obvious appeal; after all, it is empirical objects that come to us in perception, and natural causation governs the empirical world. And it certainly fits with the very Kantian thought that it is because of our nature as empirical beings that we have sensibility at all.

But it is not at all clear that the proponent of the unified account, at least in McDowell's version, is entitled to put this distinction between free and natural causes to work here. For remember that on McDowell's view of Kant, perception is a mode of encountering objects as making claims on us. But this means precisely that the world in view in sensible perception itself grips us with the force of reasons.⁹ Whereas empirical causes necessitate by blind force, it is reasons that make claims on us. If this is right, then the picture of sensory intuition as the actualization of conceptual capacities draws the distinction between the world we perceive in sensible intuition and the thoughts we think in a way that undercuts the natural association between sensibility and the idea of a forced impact from outside.

Thus the question remains why, if the operations of the faculty of concepts are spontaneous, and if intuition is shot through with such operations and originally inseparable from them, we should suppose that intuition is receptive to something other than our own productive, spontaneous activity. To ask this question is to ask, in essence, why we should understand our cognitive faculties to be subject to external influence. Descartes famously entertains just this question in the sixth of his *Meditations*. To make a start, Descartes surveys his faculties. He is a thinking thing, but one with faculties for imagination and sensory perception. These faculties must inhere in intellectual substance, since "there is an intellectual act included in their definition" (Descartes 1984, 54). In addition to these active faculties, Descartes claims that there is as well "a passive faculty" of sensory perception in him, "that is, one for receiving and recognizing ideas of sensible objects" (*ibid.*, 55). But the mere fact that he has a passive faculty of sensory perception that receives sensory

⁹ McDowell (1994) makes clear his view that the conception of the world itself as providing a specifically rational constraint on our thinking, by gripping us with reasons, is transcendently required if we are to make sense of the bearing of thought on the world. And it is clear that the reading of Kant in HWV is intended to square with that view.

ideas does not *itself* suffice to show that they come from outside of him. Thus Descartes asks whether the active faculty that produces such sensory perceptions is in him or in something else.

He quickly concludes that “this faculty cannot be in me, since clearly it presupposes no intellectual activity on my part, and the ideas in question are produced without my cooperation and often even against my will” (ibid.). But neither of these reasons is available to Kant. Regarding the second, we have already seen that the fact that we do not consciously cooperate in or will the production of sensible intuition is not sufficient, in the Kantian context, to ensure that such intuitions are not the product of our own faculties. But what of the first, that the passive faculty “does not presuppose any intellectual activity” on his part? The French version of the *Meditations* says more explicitly that the faculty producing sensory perception “cannot be in me in *so far as I am a thinking thing*, since it does not presuppose any thought on my part” (ibid., n. 1, emphasis added). But for Kant, we are not essentially thinking things, in Descartes’s precise sense. For Descartes, to think is to have ideas; this is the intellectual *act* presupposed in imagining and perceiving. And to be affected with ideas is to have them; hence the passive faculty of perception is in *him*. In contrast, to produce ideas, unlike to sense or imagine, is not necessarily to think, in Descartes’s sense. For Kant, we are beings who essentially *cognize*, and not all of our cognitive activity is a matter of having ideas, let alone ideas of which we are aware. Indeed, much explicitly productive cognitive activity is required to order the raw content of sensibility spatiotemporally, so our cognitive faculties must be actively in play before we can in fact have anything Descartes would have recognized as an idea of sensory perception. Descartes could infer from the fact that producing ideas does not require having them the faculty that produces adventitious ideas of sense is outside the mind. Kant, however, cannot.

6. RECONCEIVING GENERALITY: ALLISON’S TRANSCENDENTAL SCHEMATA

In this and the [next section](#), I want to consider a pair of discussions from the recent literature that bear closely on our problematic. One is the treatment of the schematism in Henry Allison’s *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism* (1983). Allison, unlike most commentators, defends the schematism chapter’s success in showing how pure concepts of the understanding, in any event, can find application to objects of intuition via the

intermediation of schemata, and one aspect of his solution instructively parallels the central move in McDowell's unified account. The other is Hannah Ginsborg's novel interpretation¹⁰ of Kant's solution to the problem of how concepts can be brought to bear on the matter of sensibility. Her discussion, like Allison's, reorients the problematic of the application of concepts to intuition by denying that the fundamental issue for Kant is the opposition between generality or universality, on the one hand, and particularity, on the other. As I hope to show, both Allison's and Ginsborg's accounts, insofar as they have any hope of resolving the precise concerns that they respectively address, depend upon a revision of the standard reading of Kant's account of sensibility and understanding at least as dramatic as McDowell's. And both accounts, I shall argue, are equally subject to the charge of idealism.

On Allison's view, it is not concepts' generality per se that accounts for their problematic heterogeneity with sensible intuitions, which leads in turn to the need for schemata. Rather, it is "the fact that the pure concepts of the understanding, in contrast even to 'pure sensible' or mathematical concepts, are derived from the very nature of the understanding. As such they have no direct relation to intuition" (Allison 1983, 178). His main textual ground for this reading is Kant's puzzling discussion of the homogeneity of the pure concept of a circle with the empirical concept of a plate, Allison says: "the crucial difference between mathematical concepts and pure concepts of the understanding [is that] the former can be constructed, that is presented in pure, formal intuition, and the latter cannot. Indeed, it [is] this very heterogeneity between pure concept and intuition that generate[s] the problem of the schematism in the first place" (*ibid.*, 184).

Allison also suggests that much of the trouble commentators have had with the schematism is that they treat the sort of subsumption under concepts that schemata are supposed to facilitate as that of particulars under class concepts, as in judgment. This is how I conceived it in the first section of this essay, and so conceived, it is a mystery how schemata can be any help, because their generality presents the very same problem for subsumption as the generality of concepts. As Allison points out, so conceived, the notion of subsumption is simply inapt to characterize the relation between the pure categories and intuitions, which is one of structure to content or form to matter, not universal to particular. Drawing on passages from Kant's lectures on logic, Allison argues that Kant

¹⁰ See Ginsborg's contribution to this volume.

has in mind the sense of subsumption operative in syllogistic reasoning, where the applicability of the given judgment that forms the major premise of a syllogism to the possible judgment that forms the conclusion is established via the mediation of the minor premise, which subsumes the condition of the possible judgment under the condition of the major premise. Thus it follows from the major premise “everything composite is alterable,” and the minor premise “bodies are composite,” that “bodies are alterable,” since the condition of the conclusion (being a body) is subsumed under the condition of the major premise (being composite) by the minor premise’s declaration that bodies are composite. Note here that the condition is general, not particular. Given all this, Allison infers that what is required to show the subsumability of intuitions under the pure categories is something analogous to the conditions of the rule represented by the pure concept, which can play the role of the middle term of the syllogism in bringing the rule to bear on possible intuition. These, of course, will be the transcendental schemata of the categories.

Recall that transcendental schemata cannot be pure creatures of understanding, but nonetheless must be general. Since, for Allison, it is not the generality per se of the category that keeps it from being homogeneous with intuition, but rather the impossibility of its being *directly* exhibited in intuition, the fact that schemata are general will not prevent them from being homogeneous with intuition. Yet they cannot for all that be purely the product of the understanding – derived from it alone – lest they inherit the pure categories’ heterogeneity with intuition. Allison holds that a transcendental schema is a determinate pure intuition, where being determinate entails being a conceptualization, where being pure entails being a priori, and where the intuitive element “must be located in the irreducibly sensible component of the representation” (ibid., 184). Allison thus emphasizes Kant’s characterization of schemata as “sensible concepts” (A146/B186). Only so conceived, with an irreducible sensible element and yet a fully conceptualized one, can they be third things bringing intuition within the condition of the categories.

On Allison’s reading of the schematism, then, it seems that Kant has posited a genuinely new and different kind of representation, one that is sensible in being a specification *in intuition* of the conditions pertaining to a concept. As Allison remarks, “Although Kant, of course, begins with the radical separation of sensibility and understanding, intuition and concept, the very heart of his account of knowledge consists in the claim that any cognition of an object involves both elements” (1983, 184). This is akin to McDowell’s unified view, on which the episodes of

sensory awareness are always actualizations of conceptual capacities, with the difference that for McDowell, these episodes are intuitions themselves, whereas for Allison, the products of these originally unified elements are schemata essential to all cognition. One might think that this difference enables Allison to avoid the worry I have rehearsed about idealism in a way that is not available to McDowell. For these schemata, though they themselves cannot be thought of as mere deliverances from outside (since they are products of conceptual activity), mediate between intuition and the categories. So it might seem open to Allison to regard the intuitions themselves as genuinely *received*. But this approach is not open on Allison's reading of the schematism. For he is quite clear that he regards schematism not as a part of the synthesis issuing in unity in the manifold, but as an independent requirement on how the categories under which all unity must fall can be brought to bear on them. Part of his justification for his reading of the schematism is precisely that there is work to be done over and above that achieved in the account of synthesis.

As for presynthetic intuition, Allison claims that in the second edition of the first *Critique*, Kant "explicitly abstracts from any consideration of the manner in which the manifold is given." "The only assumption," he continues, "is that we are dealing with a mind for which the manifold must be given."¹¹ The idea that Kant "abstracts from consideration" the manner in which the manifold must be given can make it seem as though there is something about that manner that helps to guide or constrain synthesis, but that Kant is being silent about how this works, leaving it an open and possibly unanswerable question. This would be a dangerous conclusion to draw. For any presynthetic character intuition might have would be in no way a function of the conditions of our sensibility. What would be so given would have to be an object as it is in itself, rather than as it is insofar as it relates to the conditions of our cognition of it. And to suppose that would be to violate perhaps the most central tenet of critical philosophy. So in claiming that Kant abstracts away from considerations of the manner in which the manifold is given, Allison must be denying that this plays any essential role in Kant's argument, even a mysterious, hidden one. But this leaves us with the question of why Kant's assumption, insofar as it implies that we are genuinely receptive with respect to this given, should be granted at all.

Allison's claim that the assumption merely amounts to the assumption that we are not endowed with intellectual intuition cannot help here. For,

¹¹ Allison (1983), 181–2.

as I have argued, a being for whom the operations of its own faculties are not transparent might be the source of its own sensible representations, and take them as received. While a genuinely receptive cognition could not involve an intellectual intuition, to suppose that we must be genuinely receptive because we have no intellectual intuition would be to affirm the consequent.

In sum, then, Allison's reading of the schematism and his characterization of Kant's view of sensibility in the second edition of the first *Critique* trade on a notion of originally conceptual sensibility like McDowell's unified view of sensibility and understanding in intuition. And, like McDowell's view, it threatens to be idealistic by calling into doubt the genuine receptivity of sensibility, and with it the independence of the world required to underwrite objective judgment.

7. RECONCEIVING GENERALITY: GINSBORG'S VALID ASSOCIATIONS

Hannah Ginsborg attempts in this volume to account for the normative force of empirical concepts, and thus to satisfy the answerability demand implicit in the notion of objectivity. She argues that the fundamental sense of 'universal' in Kant is not the universality of concepts in virtue of which the subsumption of the particular under the universal is an objectively valid judgment. It is, rather, the universal "validity for everyone" that characterizes judgments, even aesthetic judgments whose ground is a subjective feeling (Ginsborg, this volume). Ginsborg argues that this normativity – the fact that applications of concepts to intuitions can be correct or incorrect – derives from our natural disposition to associate one kind of representation with certain others, combined with a judgment that such associative correlations are universally valid, in the sense of being such that everyone ought to make the same association. She claims that Kant adopted the Humean suggestion "that we can account for my entertaining the general idea *tree* by supposing that I have an idea of some particular tree, coupled with a readiness to call to mind ideas of other trees" (ibid.), and supplemented it in two crucial ways. First, he held that, when an idea arises in us as a consequence of an association, we take it "to be the upshot not merely of a certain tendency in myself, but of a tendency which is universally valid" (ibid.). Second, he extended the theory to account "not just for general thought and belief, but for perception itself" (ibid.). This last addition is crucial, for otherwise, the capacity to perceive objects as being of a certain kind in a manifold of intuition

would remain unexplained. Ginsborg is also careful to make clear that these associative dispositions do not operate via an antecedent *recognition* of resemblances among representations, for such recognitional capacities would themselves involve our grouping things according to a general rule or concept.

But Ginsborg's suggestion does not quite go deep enough to let us escape the precise problem under examination here. For there remains the question of how we are to conceive the content of the representations over which the natural associative dispositions operate. Surely they must have some particular distinguishing content, if it is to make sense to say that a natural disposition might associate some of these particular representations with some particular others. Associative dispositions must operate over features of the associated items even if they need not do so by means of some general rule. More basically, the representations over which dispositions operate must have some determinate features if it can be meaningfully said that the association groups distinct representations at all. In short, the kinds of representations it so much as makes sense to say could be the subject of the operation of associative dispositions must already be structured in a way that Kant reserves for products of synthesis. So the question remains, in what sense is the formation and character of these representation guided by the sensible matter of intuition? If Ginsborg's proposed solution is to work, it must do so in the context of a rejection, like McDowell's, of sheer sensibility, in favor of, if not an account of intuition in which sensibility always and originally involves the actualization of specifically conceptual capacities, then one in which it always and originally involves the operations of imaginative synthesis. But as we have seen, a repudiation of sheer, pre-synthesized sensibility, given Kant's account of synthesis as an operation of the understanding, invites the same general idealist worry about our entitlement to the claim that our thinking is genuinely receptive at all.

Insofar as Ginsborg's account depends upon a rejection of sheer sensibility, it is no less difficult to square with Kant's text in the first *Critique* – in which the faculties of sensibility and understanding make originally distinct contributions to cognition – than is McDowell's. One should in fairness point out, however, that Ginsborg, unlike McDowell, is offering an account of empirical concept application and formation not as they are manifest simply in the first *Critique*, but as they may be seen through the lens of the third. And while Kant is preoccupied with the relationship between sensibility and understanding in the third *Critique*, he no longer frames the issues in terms of intuition. There, Kant does not make

mention of anything like sheer sensibility, in its presynthetic sense, at all. He is preoccupied not with what to make of sensible contents without structure or form, but with what to make of sensible contents with form, but to which no concept is applied or perhaps even adequate. Thus Ginsborg's apparent elision of the notion of sheer intuition does not seem jarring as a reading of Kant's views in the third *Critique*.

This suggests that Kant's thinking may have evolved over the years intervening between the publication of the first and third *Critiques* in such a way that he no longer saw much of a role for sheer, presynthesized sensibility. Allison's remark that the second edition of the first *Critique*, published just two years before the appearance of the third *Critique*, "abstracts away from consideration of the manner in which the manifold may be given" adds weight to this suggestion.¹² If the speculation is right that Kant himself, by the time of the publication of the third *Critique*, had become doubtful of the need for and intelligibility of sheer presynthesized intuition, then the unified view McDowell offers, and Ginsborg's view as well, stand on better ground as interpretations of Kant's considered stance than I have so far suggested. But if it is also right that this rejection leads to the threat of idealism, by removing the one element of cognition innocent of the operations of spontaneity, then Kant should have recognized this threat and tried to disarm it. He did.

8. REFUTING IDEALISM?

Kant himself clearly thought, as of the time of the publication of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, that the threat of the sort of idealism that denies that we are affected from without by empirical objects was pressing and required an answer. This is what he tried to provide in the second edition's Refutation of Idealism (B270–4), and, evidently dissatisfied with the official exposition of this argument, he added substantial new material designed to elucidate the refutation in a footnote to the preface to the second edition (Bxxxix). The brief but penetrating argument of the Refutation may be sketched as follows: We have empirical consciousness of our own existence. All consciousness of objects requires something permanent in perception. But this permanent thing cannot be the empirical self, since this self, so far as it is in

¹² Allison (1983), in Ch. 14, suggests something along these lines in light of the extensively reworked, de-psychologized transcendental deduction that Kant offers in the second edition.

perception, is mere representation. Hence we must have experience of genuinely outer objects.

This is, of course, the conclusion we need: that there is an outer source of our experience. I cannot go into this argument in any detail here, but it is to be emphasized that if the argument is to be of any use in overcoming the threat of idealism (and to objectivity) that I have been discussing here, it must not depend on any claims argued for in the *Aesthetic* or *Analytic* that in turn depend upon the notion of sheer receptivity. On the face of it,¹³ it does not. Indeed, it does not obviously trade at all in Kant's faculty psychology, let alone on a radical distinction between sensibility and understanding. The argument of the *Refutation* is novel and remarkably forward-looking. In it, Kant tries to turn the tables on the Cartesian skeptic by urging that the certainty he takes for granted about the existence of the thinking ego, relative to which the existence of the external world is in doubt, itself depends upon an equal certainty about the existence of enduring external objects. The *Refutation* implies that the idea of a self as a subject of inner representation is in some way derivative on, or in any event no less primordial than, the idea of a public world with which that self has immediate commerce. Adherence to this claim is more or less orthodoxy among a number of our distinctly post-Modern philosophical contemporaries, including Sellars, McDowell, Davidson, Putnam, Evans, Burge, and a host of others. These philosophers plainly take the claim to provide a bulwark against both idealism and skepticism, and they typically oppose it directly to the Cartesian immediacy about our knowledge of our minds and inferentialism about our knowledge of the world that typifies Modern philosophy up to and including (most of) Kant. But this is not to say that the argument of the *refutation* is successful as Kant presents it or that Kant would be entitled to any such externalist orientation. Indeed, there are ample reasons for supposing that Kant himself thought otherwise. As Guyer (1987, Part IV) documents, Kant continued to revise and rework the material of the *Refutation* throughout the 1780s and early 1790s.

The claim that sensibility and understanding are an ultimate original unity, itself ungrounded, is in the end inescapable for Kant and leads to

¹³ But perhaps only on the face of it. Some commentators, like Gardner (1999), take the *Refutation* to be a mere extension of the reasoning of the *Transcendental Aesthetic* and preceding sections of the *Analytic*, and in need of supplement by that reasoning for its conclusion to go through. Others, like Guyer (1987) and Strawson (1966), albeit in very different ways, take the *Refutation* to offer a separate argument altogether, independent of that prior reasoning.

an idealist threat that must be addressed. The idea of a content that is independent of the operations of synthesis, hence independent of the conditions of the possibility of our cognition, and is yet sufficiently determinate to play a role in guiding synthesis, is the transcendental realist idea of something's appearing to us as it is in itself. The rejection of this idea is a cornerstone of Kant's Copernican turn. But a sheer sensibility conceived as utterly indeterminate and unstructured cannot play any explanatory role in accounting for objective cognition. In the Kantian context, the attempt to avoid the epistemic impotence of intuition by conceiving it as conceptually rich renders the idea of receptivity nothing more than a dubious assumption. From this perspective, it seems that Sellars is right that sheer receptivity was a bad strategy for "avoiding the dialectic which leads from Hegel's *Phenomenology* to nineteenth century idealism" (Sellars 1992, 16, quoted at HWV 466). Kant himself, I suspect, realized this and backed away from according a significant role to sheer sensibility. But that backing away left a role exclusively for the kind of intuition that is shot through and unified with the spontaneous operations of the understanding. That the faculties form an original unity is not an idea that arises only with the denial of a substantial role for sheer presynthetic sensibility. Even in the Introduction to the first edition of the first *Critique*, Kant concedes that sensibility and understanding "may arise from a common but unknown root" (A15/B29). As Charles Larmore has recently argued, because of the central role of sensibility and understanding within the critical philosophy, both in Kant's account of human knowledge and in the generation of other Kantian dualisms, "something also needed to be said about their underlying unity" (Larmore 2003, 264). I speculate that Kant was more aware of the need to say more about the common root and original unity of sensibility and understanding than he ever was willing to do,¹⁴ and that part of the reason he was unwilling to do so is the threat of idealism that that union presents. The Refutation of Idealism and Kant's subsequent repeated efforts to recast it more satisfactorily represent his

¹⁴ In this I side with Larmore (2003) in his recent debate with Ameriks (2003), who claims that the first *Critique*, like the *Prolegomena*, is modest in intention in taking an unquestioned starting point in experience, and that only a failure by Kant's critics and successors to recognize this led them to seek some single, unified principle from which the dualism of sensibility and understanding might arise. (See also Ameriks 2000). Heidegger (1990) famously argues that in the Transcendental Deduction of the first edition, Kant approached the unifying root of which the Introduction speaks, the full recognition of which would have required a radical revision of his views; Kant, intimates Heidegger, lost his nerve and balked.

attempt to finesse that threat without having to delve further into the nature of that root and unity.

But let this rest as speculation. More concretely, we have evidence that whether or not Kant held the unified view or something very like it as of the publication of the second edition of the first *Critique*, he felt the threat of this kind of idealism as real, and very much desired to meet it head-on with an actual refutation. Thus it seems unlikely that Kant would have been happy with McDowell's brushing off of the problem with the mere claim that the apparent passivity of sensibility suffices to show genuine receptivity. If we are entitled to deny that this is a genuine threat, as McDowell clearly believes, it is for reasons Kant himself may have sought but did not fathom.¹⁵

¹⁵ In thinking through and writing this essay, I greatly benefited from discussions with Andrew Brook, Paul Guyer, Jamie Kelly, Kris Liljefors, Amy Lund, John McDowell, Sergio Tenenbaum, and Alex Wong. My greatest debt is to Rebecca Kukla, with whom I organized the symposium at the joint conference of the North-East American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies and the Atlantic Society for 18th Century Studies, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 2001 that provided the first occasion for me to attempt to make these issues clear to myself, with whom I have had many extremely rewarding conversations on this and other related topics, and from whom I have received several rounds of insightful and helpful comments on my text. My thanks to all, and especially to her.

Acquaintance and Cognition

Mark Okrent

What does my dog see when he sees a bus? This might seem to be an odd question with which to begin an essay on Kant. In fact, it is a question that goes to the heart of a puzzle that I have always found to be quite deep. The puzzle can be made intuitively clear to almost anyone, regardless of philosophical training. But it is also a puzzle that touches the core of the Kantian enterprise, and that can be put quite clearly as a question concerning the details of Kant's views regarding the relationship between the possibility of self-consciousness and the possibility of representing objects as objects. The puzzle is this: Is there any sense in which animals who lack reflection in the human sense, and thus also lack a discursive understanding and the capacity to form judgments, nevertheless represent entities as objects distinct from their own representations? If the answer to this question is "yes," as I will argue that it must be, then we must confront a new and different question: What, exactly, are reflection and the capacity to judge necessary *for*?

1. THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROBLEM

a. The Intuitive Formulation

In its intuitive, secular form, here is the problem. There is surely a sense in which my dog (whose name is Mac) *sees* the large yellow school bus that, every weekday afternoon at 3:20, turns the corner on which our house sits. Not only is he equipped with the sensory apparatus typical of his species, but he responds differentially to the presence or absence of the bus. Further, Mac is an organism of a certain complexity and sophistication.

And this implies that Mac's reaction to the presence of the bus seems to vary as a function of his, invisible to us, internal state. (When Mac is tired, he reacts in one way; when not tired, he reacts in another way.) As it happens, one way in which Mac often reacts to seeing the bus is (while staying safely on our property) to run over in the direction of the place where the bus stops to let out children before turning the corner and then, as the bus is starting up again, to run around the back of the house (he is blocked by an invisible fence from going around the front of the house and keeping the bus in view) to wait for the bus to turn the corner, and to proceed to race it to the end of our property line, barking like mad the entire time. (That he acts in this way is characteristic of his breed, as Mac is a Shetland Sheepdog who herds by barking and running in just this way, and who apparently extends his herding behavior from sheep to large yellow buses.) So there is not much question that Mac *sees* the bus.

But there also seems to be another sense in which it is right to say, in another tone of voice, that my dog doesn't see the *bus*. Or perhaps we should say that he doesn't see the bus *as* a bus, or see *that* it is a bus. Mac, for all of his virtues, appears to lack the ability to recognize that what he is seeing is a bus; that is, that it satisfies that set of standards that qualifies something as a bus or that this entity possesses the marks of a school bus. It appears that he lacks a grasp on what it is to be a bus and, in the absence of such conceptual sophistication, that he cannot take what he sees as a bus. Mac is lacking in the capacity to judge. So, while it might be true to say (*de re*, as it were) that what he sees is a bus, it is not right to say that he sees (*de dicto*) a *bus*, or that he takes what he sees to be a bus.

For the same reasons, it also seems that it would be a mistake to say that Mac sees the bus as a vehicle or as a large, noisy, smelly thing. The reasons that it seems wrong to say that the dog sees the bus as a bus don't have to do with either the clarity of the concept of a bus or with the scope of its extension, so choosing a vaguer or a broader description of what Mac sees has no effect on whether he sees what he sees as this or that. The problem is that Mac does not have the ability to reflect on the character of his own acts or his own representations. Intuitively it appears that in order to see something as a bus, one must be able to recognize that one is seeing a bus, that is, one must be able to represent one's own representation as of the bus type. But this requires the ability to reflect on the character of one's own representational states. And, for Mac, this act of reflection is out of the question.

Such considerations have tempted many to the following roughly Kantian line of argument.¹ Attributions of beliefs, desires, and, in general, thoughts demand that the subject of those thoughts be able to distinguish among coreferring ways in which the same entity can be described. Oedipus wants to kill the old man on the road but does not want to kill his father, even though the old man and his father are the same individual. Oedipus believes that he is seeing the old man on the road, but not that he is seeing his father, although the two are identical. And this is possible only because Oedipus recognizes what he sees as an old man blocking his path but does not recognize, or cognize, what he sees as his father. Oedipus *recognizes* what he sees as an old man in his path, that is, he judges that he is such a man, but he does not recognize what he sees as his father, that is, he does not apply the concept 'my father' in this case. And it is only in virtue of this difference in the application of concepts that it is right to say of Oedipus that he thinks that the old man is in his way but does not believe that his father is in his way. So any subject, such as my dog Mac, who lacks this ability to cognize or recognize things *as* this or that, also lacks the ability to have thoughts.

It thus seems right to conclude that no subject who lacks the ability to think of some entity as of some type is capable of thought at all. And whatever other abilities are necessary for cognizing something as something must, then, also be necessary for having thoughts. Philosophers in the twentieth century frequently suggested that a capacity to use and understand language is necessary for thought; in the eighteenth century, Kant suggested that thought requires the use of concepts ("Cognition through concepts is called *thought* [*Denken*]"²) and that the use and acquisition of concepts require reflection, or self-consciousness ("The logical *actus* of the understanding, through which concepts are generated as to their form, are: 1. *comparison* of representations among one another in relation to the unity of consciousness; 2. *reflection* as to how various representations can be conceived in one consciousness; and finally 3. *abstraction* of everything else in which the representations differ").³ And this seems right as well. To cognize something as something is to recognize that the thing belongs to a type, and this recognition just *is* the application of a concept. But it appears that the only way to acquire such a concept so as

¹ It seems to me that Wilfred Sellars and Donald Davidson are two who have given in to this temptation.

² Kant (1992), *Jäsche Logic*, Sec. 1, 589.

³ Ibid, Sec. 6, 592.

to be able to apply it is to reflect on the relations among one's various representations, and the ability to do this in turn appears to depend upon the ability to represent various representations in a single mental act. So any agent who lacks this reflective ability also lacks the ability to apply concepts, and in lacking this ability lacks the ability to think of things as this or that, and with this disability, also lacks the capacity to think at all.

It is also natural to extend this line of argument one step further. Any agent who lacks the capacity to judge must also, it seems, lack the ability to cognize objects *as* objects at all. Take what my dog sees at the first appearance of the bus, before it turns the corner, as an example. Presumably he has some representation, or perhaps we should say some complex of representations, at that time. Using a Lockean paradigm, perhaps *we* might describe this complex (although Mac could not so describe it) in the following terms: loud, abrasive mechanical noise, smell of diesel fuel, yellow patch, spinning wheels, and so on. But nowhere in this sensed complex is there any element that displays an *object*, that is, something that perdures, or continues identical with itself through time and can have properties that change only if they are caused to change. It appears that to cognize an object a subject must represent a sense complex *as* an object, that is, recognize that the complex of sensations that are presented to one at present are an example of the types of representations that are characteristic, under current conditions, of some type of continuing, self-identical bearer of causally determined properties. And, to do this, it seems that an agent must be able to *think*, that is, to reflectively apply concepts in judgments. So the conclusion seems inevitable: Whatever my dog Mac sees when he reacts to (*de re*) the school bus, it is not an object.

We can now see the problem. From our armchairs, we have come to the conclusion that Mac has no perceptions of objects. But this can't be right. In our dealings with our dogs we count on their object recognition abilities all of the time. Mac's behavior around the bus suggests both that he responds to it as an object, as a continuously identical substance with causally determined properties, and that his ability to recognize that object depends upon a capacity to use the partial presence of the bus's sensory properties as *marks* for the presence of the object that is the bus. Given the configuration of our property, when the bus is stopped to let off children, Mac can neither see nor smell nor hear the bus. The sensory stimuli characteristic of the bus are simply absent. The house blocks his vision; sometimes the bus turns off and makes no noise; the distance is too great for him to smell and the wind often blows in the wrong direction. Nevertheless, it seems that Mac anticipates the presence of the bus around

the corner. He runs around the house and waits until the bus appears. On the rare occasions on which the bus, for one reason or another, does not turn the corner, Mac seems to get agitated and “look for” it, checking the last spot at which he saw it, and so on. In the dead of the Maine winter when the house is closed up tight, and Mac can only see the bus out of selected windows, he can hear the bus well before he can see it. Mac’s solution: run to the window from which the bus is first visible, wait for it to stop and start up again, run like hell to the last spot from which it is visible, a hall door with a window at human eye level, and leap five feet straight up to look out of the window as the bus goes past, barking like mad the entire time. If you want to get Mac really agitated and act out of what seems to be terror, walk him past an unmoving, non-doggy-smelling statue of a dog. And on and on and . . .

Now, there are two things that must be said about all of this evidence. The first, of course, is that all of the evidence presented here is entirely anecdotal. Second, this sort of evidence of recognition of objects as objects in animals has classically been explained away by appeal to “mere” imaginative association. But neither of these remarks, it seems to me, really undercuts the behavioral evidence of Mac’s object recognition abilities. Let me explain why.

First, regarding the anecdotal character of the evidence of animal object recognition. If Mac’s behavior were that of a ten-month-old non-verbal human infant, we would immediately conclude that she was identifying the bus on the basis of partial representations, believing that the bus continues to exist, with the same properties, when it is not present perceptually, expecting the bus to have similar properties at different times and on different occasions, and being surprised at unexplained alterations or differences in the properties of objects. Indeed, we would (and do) consider such behavior to be *criterial* of the presence of object recognition. The reason for this is obvious. The best way to explain these behaviors, as well as a host of abilities such as the capacity to distinguish and respond differentially to different perduring individuals of the same type, even when those individuals’ sensory character alters markedly – think of dogs’ legendary ability to recognize and respond in distinctive ways to their masters after a long absence – is to attribute representations of objects *as* objects to these animals. Evolutionary considerations point toward the same inference. The form of social and hunting life characteristic of dogs, for example, is possible only if the dog can reidentify a single continuing individual as to be responded to in similar ways in very different sensory situations, whether that individual is prey, or another

member of the pack, or a human being. And the most efficient, perhaps the only, way to ensure such recognition abilities is by representing those individuals as continuing, self-identical subjects with causally determined properties.

But perhaps there is another way to explain these abilities. Here is how the explanation is supposed to go. Mac doesn't represent the bus as an object; the fact that in the past he has repeatedly seen, heard, and smelled together the sensory stimuli characteristic of the bus at the first point of vision, repeatedly followed by the stimuli given at the second point of vision, causes Mac to reproduce the second type of sensory image when newly presented with the first, and this second image causes him to act as if he expected the bus to be around the corner. In essence, the suggestion is that the behavior of higher nonhuman animals can be explained by appeal to simple stimulus-response mechanisms defined over complexes of mere sensory stimulation. But to describe the suggestion in this way is also to see what is wrong with it. Perhaps it was plausible in the eighteenth century to think that such mere associative mechanisms were sufficient to account for the behavioral capacities of nonhuman mammals. But this account is not plausible now. The evidence that led to the collapse of behaviorism as a research program for explaining mammal behavior is just the evidence that shows that this eighteenth-century suggestion that the mere associative powers of imagination are sufficient to account for the full range of animal cognitive abilities is a nonstarter.

And the failure of this behaviorist-associativist explanation of Mac's behavior leaves us with the problem I mean to discuss. What is it that Mac sees when he sees (*de re*) the bus? Does he see what he sees as an *object*, a perduring subject of causally determined properties, a subject that remains identical with itself across changes in its properties, or not? If he doesn't see what he sees as an object, then how should we describe what he sees, given that it seems wrong to say that he just experiences mere sense contents and their imaginative reproductions? If he does see objects as objects, then how is this possible given that Mac lacks the capacity to form and apply concepts, and thus lacks the capacity to judge?

b. The Kantian Formulation

There is a very neat Kantian form of this problem. While it is possible to formulate the problem in Kantian terms without making any reference to Kant's views regarding animal sapience, if we do allow ourselves the

luxury of appealing to his scattered remarks concerning animals, we can specify the Kantian version of the problem by exhibiting what appears to be an inconsistent triad of propositions, all of which Kant appears to assert. Kant holds all of the following:

1. Intuitions involve a reference to an object. ("All cognitions [*Erkenntnisse*], that is, all representations related with consciousness to an object, are either *intuitions* or *concepts*.")⁴
2. Animals, although they lack the ability to apply concepts, have intuitions. ("Due to the lack of consciousness, even animals are not capable of any concept – intuitions they do have.")⁵
3. Cognition of objects requires a unitary consciousness of the act through which a manifold is combined and the ability to apply concepts. ("For this unitary consciousness is what combines the manifold, successively intuited, and thereupon also reproduced, into one representation. This consciousness may often be only faint, so that we do not connect it with the act itself, that is, not in any direct manner with the *generation* of the representation, but only with the outcome [that which is thereby represented]. But notwithstanding these variations, such consciousness, however indistinct, must always be present; without it, concepts, and therewith cognition [*Erkenntnis*] of objects are altogether impossible.")⁶

As this set of assertions should make clear, the Kantian form of the problem of animal sapience turns on the status of intuitions. Kant holds that in a very important sense, we see what we judge. The objects that we perceptually encounter have the same structural character as the objects about which we form judgments. "The same function which gives unity to the various representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of various representations in an intuition..."⁷ It is this isomorphism between the conceptual structures inherent in judgment and the intuitive structures inherent in perception that provides Kant with the clue he needs to produce both the Metaphysical Deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding and the Transcendental Deduction of the validity of those categories in empirical knowledge. Most of the

⁴ Ibid, Sec. 1, 589.

⁵ Kant (1992), *Dohna-Wundlacken Logic*, Doctrine of Elements, 440.

⁶ Kant (1965), A103–4, modified translation.

⁷ Ibid., A79/B104.

time Kant gives a complex explanation for this structural isomorphism. This account turns on rational beings having two abilities: The ability to combine or relate (synthesize) various representations, a capacity that he assigns to the faculty of imagination, and the ability to reflectively recognize the rule or principle that the imagination follows in synthesizing representations. This second, reflective, capacity Kant assigns to the faculty of understanding, and he claims that it is through this operation of the understanding that syntheses are “brought to concepts.” “Synthesis in general, as we shall hereafter see, is the mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we would have no cognition whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious. To bring this synthesis to concepts is a function of the understanding, and it is through this function of the understanding that we first obtain cognition properly so called.”⁸

So, for Kant, human intuitions of objects have the same implicit structure as the conceptual structure explicit in judgment because the same rules that structure conceptual connections in a judgment also structure the connections among the intuitive elements in a perceptual intuition. For this reason, human intuitions, as well as concepts, can be said to be genuine *cognitions* (*Erkenntnisse*), that is, representations with *objective* reference, and not mere sensations or mere modifications of an agent’s subjective state.⁹ This is the cash value of passage (1) cited earlier. But, as the passage that I just quoted from the Metaphysical Deduction makes abundantly clear, Kant also seems committed to a second part of this account. To say, as Kant frequently does, that cognition, or objective representation, depends not only on the synthetic activity of imagination, but also on the reflective capacity of the understanding to explicitly represent the unitary, rule-governed character of that activity (the position articulated

⁸ Ibid., A78/B103, modified translation.

⁹ Cf., for example, A320/B376. Although taken together, Kant’s use of the term ‘*Erkenntnis*’ for ‘objective perception’, his distinction between such cognitions and mere subjective modifications or sensations, and his insistence that intuitions form a class of cognitions, presents some interpreters, and indeed Kant himself, with a set of potentially embarrassing problems of the type presented in this essay, there can be little doubt that Kant is committed to just these views. His official characterizations of cognition, sensation, and intuition are remarkably consistent throughout the *Critique* and all of the various versions of *The Logic*, and in virtually all of these characterizations objective reference is associated with *Erkenntnis*. Beyond this, the suggestion that intuition prior to judgment is in some sense merely proto-referential cannot be made coherent, a conclusion I will argue toward later by showing why two different forms of this suggestion cannot work.

in (3)) is to assert that no agent who is incapable of such reflection, such as my dog, is capable of perceiving, or intuiting, objects at all.

Nevertheless, in (2) Kant explicitly asserts that, though lacking in the reflective self-consciousness essential to understanding, animals *do* have intuitions. And in (1) Kant asserts that intuitions are a species of representation related with consciousness *to an object*. But if Kant is committed to this view, the view that animals that lack the reflective capacities of the understanding still intuit objects, then how can he nevertheless maintain, as he does, that consciousness of the unitary act in which a manifold is synthesized is necessary for the use of concepts, and the use of concepts is necessary for the cognition of objects? This is the specifically Kantian form of problem that I mean to discuss.

2. THE TWO-OBJECT SOLUTION

Before offering my own solution to the problem (a solution that turns on rethinking, in a way suggested by Heidegger's reading of Kant, Kant's commitment to the primary importance of the understanding for the intentional character of cognition), I will briefly look at two other possible resolutions to the aporia I have already outlined. Both of these attempted solutions turn on treating preconceptual intuitions as in one sense or another 'proto-referential'. The first, suggested by Beatrice Longuenesse, turns on distinguishing two senses of 'object'. The second, which I will extract from Kant's discussion of animal sapience in scattered remarks in the *Logic*, turns on distinguishing two senses of 'intuition'. I will argue that both of these suggested resolutions of the aporia fail to resolve Kant's difficulties successfully.

There would seem to be an obvious solution to the Kantian form of the problem that I have laid out. Both we rational creatures and our nonrational animal cousins represent objects, we through our intuitions and our concepts and the animals through their intuitions. But what we and the animals thereby represent, the respective objects, are different in kind. We represent 'phenomena' (*Phaenomena*), both intuitively and conceptually, as well as intuitively representing appearances; animals represent only 'appearances' (*Erscheinungen*).

There is no question that Kant makes the distinction between the appearance, the object of mere intuition, and the phenomenon, or the object which is thought corresponding to this intuition. Indeed, in *The Critique of Pure Reason* he makes this distinction in, for him, a pretty consistent fashion. An appearance is "the undetermined object of an empirical

intuition. . . .”¹⁰ To say that an object is “undetermined” is, for Kant, to say that it has not been categorized, or thought, through the application of concepts. So appearances are objects insofar as they are given in intuition but not represented as this or that through conceptual judgments. Kant characterizes phenomena in contrast with appearances. “Appearances, so far as they are thought according to the unity of the categories, are called *phaenomena*.”¹¹ Thus, insofar as one cognizes objects conceptually, what one intends is entitled a phenomenon. “Now there are two conditions under which alone cognition of an object is possible, first *intuition*, through which it is given, though only as appearance; secondly, *concept*, through which an object is thought corresponding to this intuition.”¹²

Armed with this distinction, it seems to be a simple matter to resolve the inconsistency in Kant’s thought that I pointed out earlier. The problem is that it seems that, on Kant’s view, animals must both intend and fail to intend objects. Insofar as they have intuitions, they intend objects. Insofar as they lack concepts, they fail to intend objects. On this “two-object” solution, the apparent contradiction arises out of a more or less innocuous ambiguity in the word object. Both humans and other animals intend ‘objects’. But animals only intend appearances, the undetermined objects of intuition, while we intend both appearances and phenomena, which are the objects of judgments. As intentions directed toward phenomena require the application of concepts, animals cannot cognize such objects. But being aware of appearances, the undetermined objects of intuition, requires only a sensibility capable of sensible intuition, and animals can possess that faculty. So there is no contradiction.

In her superb book *Kant and the Capacity to Judge*, Beatrice Longuenesse essentially opts for this two-object solution to the puzzle. Supported by the very strong textual evidence in favor of the appearance–phenomenon distinction, Longuenesse suggests that the passage I just quoted from Section 14 distinguishing between the appearances given by mere intuition and the object that is thought as corresponding to this intuition should be read as distinguishing between two sorts of intentional objects, a ‘pre-objective’ object and an ‘objective’ object. The distinction “is intended to distinguish, within the realm of representation, between the object ‘only as’ appearance and the object ‘as’ object. In other words, it is intended to distinguish the object that might be called ‘pre-objective’

¹⁰ Kant (1965), A20/B65.

¹¹ Kant (1965), A248.

¹² Kant (1965), A92–3/B125, modified translation.

(the indeterminate object of empirical intuition, prior to any distinction between the representation and the object of representation) from the ‘objective’ object, or the object ‘corresponding to’ intuition.”¹³ And Longuenesse tries to flesh out this distinction between two types of intentional object with the following example. “[I]nformed by experience (the systematic comparison of our sensible intuitions), we recognize the shape seen from afar as an object (*phaenomenon*) that we think under the concept ‘tower’, and which we thereby distinguish from the *apparentia* immediately present to our intuition (a rectangular shape of various shades of brown standing out on the horizon . . .).”¹⁴

Whatever the virtues of this two-object view as a reading of the text, as a solution to the puzzle I outlined earlier it just doesn’t work philosophically. There are two problems with the proposed solution, both of which have to do with the character of the appearance, the hypothesized pre-objective indeterminate object of empirical intuition. First, as characterized by Longuenesse, for example, it is an *impossible* object. Second, for the appearance–phenomenon distinction to do the job Kant requires of it, phenomena, the objects of thought, and appearances, the objects of mere intuition, must be, and be intended by the rational subject to be, identical, rather than distinct types of objects. And if this is the case, then the proposed resolution of the inconsistency I detailed previously collapses. I will briefly outline each of these problems in turn.

First, either the appearance, as the object of empirical intuition, is represented by the intentional agent as distinct from the empirical representation in which it is given, or it is not. Longuenesse explicitly opts for the second disjunct; the pre-objective appearance is “prior to any distinction between the representation and the object of representation.” She reinforces that this is her view when she characterizes “the *apparentia* immediately present in our intuition” in entirely sense content terms, as, for example, a rectangular shape of various shades of brown. But if this is all that the appearance amounts to – if there is no distinction *within the realm of representation* between the sensory representation and the object represented by that representation – then in what sense, if any, are the sensory representations representations of an *object* at all? It is of course the case that we can recognize that what the dog sees when it intuits the bus is, *de re*, a bus. But that is not what is at issue. Rather, what is at issue is the intentional character, “within the realm of representation”

¹³ Longuenesse (1998), 24.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

of the intuitive, nonconceptual representations. And if having an intuition is in no way distinct from having sensory representations that, by themselves, contain *no* reference to an object (“A perception which relates solely to the subject as the modification of its state is *sensation*, an objective perception is cognition [*Erkenntnis*]. This is either *intuition* or *concept*”¹⁵), then Kant himself must be in error on his own terms when he says that having an intuition is having a representation “related with consciousness to an object.” That is, as Longuenesse characterizes it, the pre-objective object of mere intuition is no object at all. The concept of *object* has no content apart from its opposition to mere sensory representation. So on this view, ‘appearance’ is simply another word for ‘complex of sensations’. Thus interpreting appearances, the undetermined objects of empirical intuition, in such terms offers no solution to the puzzle I have presented.

So we are thrown onto the other horn of the dilemma. To make any sense of the distinction between sensation and intuition, the appearance – the undetermined object of empirical intuition – must be *posterior* to the distinction between representation and the object of representation. Or perhaps it would be better to say that this distinction first occurs in and through the empirical intuition, as this is the first level of representation at which the distinction is manifest. If one accepts this position, however, then one must confront the problem of how to characterize the appearance as the *object* of empirical intuition.

Now Kant does not hesitate to characterize appearances, that is, the undetermined object of empirical intuition. For Kant, such objects just are identical with phenomena. As we saw, Kant frames the distinction between appearances and phenomena in such a way that it is the appearances themselves that are called phenomena under certain conditions: “Appearances, so far as they are thought as objects according to the categories, are called phenomena.” That this should be the case is hardly surprising. The entire problematic of the critical philosophy arises out of the problem specified in Section 13: “namely, how *subjective conditions of thought* can have *objective validity*, that is, can furnish conditions of the possibility of all cognition [*Erkenntnis*] of objects.”¹⁶ And the context makes abundantly clear that Kant sees this problem of the objective validity of the categories in terms of the question of how those categories are related to the conditions on empirical intuition. Let us assume for a second that

¹⁵ Kant (1965), A320/B376.

¹⁶ Kant (1965), A89/B122.

the class of objects of intuition (let's call it O_1) was disjoint from the class of the objects of judgment (O_2). In this case, it is hard to see how any empirical intuitions we might have of appearances, the class of objects belonging to O_1 , could ever be relevant to our judgments concerning the objects in O_2 . It is only because the members of these classes are identical, and are intended as identical by the one who judges, that the empirical content of our intuitions could be, and be intended to be, evidence for our judgments about the objects of thought. Further, Kant's solution to the problem of Section 13 depends in part upon this identity of the objects of thought and of intuition. If the objects that we intuit were not identical with the objects about which we make judgments, then the fact, if it is a fact, that we could not cognize the objects of thought unless certain conditions were met would be entirely irrelevant to the possibility of our cognizing the objects of intuition.

It should now be obvious that the two-object solution to the problem of Kant's apparently inconsistent remarks concerning animal sapience is no solution at all. Not only is it impossible to characterize the object of intuition separately from the object of judgment, but even if one could do this, the very act of doing so would render empirical evidence irrelevant to judgment.

3. ACQUAINTANCE AND RECOGNITION: THE TWO TYPES OF INTUITION

For Kant the great division between kinds of representation is the distinction between representations that contain an intentional relation to an object and those that don't. Kant's name for the first, intentional, class of representations is, in German, *Erkenntnis*, in Latin, *cognitio*, and the mental activity of utilizing such representations is titled *erkennen* or *cognoscere*, 'recognition'. It is a perhaps necessary but still unfortunate fact that since *Erkenntnis* is sometimes translated into English as 'knowledge' and sometimes as 'cognition', Kant's consistent usage is somewhat obscured in translation. Kant is also consistent in specifying that the two great classes of cognitions are concepts and intuitions. Kant's name for the intentional object of intuition is 'appearance'. Such an object is 'undetermined' in the sense that the object that is merely given in intuition has not been determined, or characterized, by means of a reflection that specifies in a judgment the nature of the intuition that gives the object. Insofar as such a reflection has been carried out, this very same object that is given in intuition is determined regarding its type, and is called a phenomenon.

The two classes of cognitions are concepts and intuitions. As a kind of representation, cognitions are distinguished from other types of representation by the fact that all cognitions involve an intentional relation to an object. Unfortunately, however, Kant does not seem to have been entirely clear on the issue of how such an objective reference of cognitions is possible. Consider again the inconsistent set of assertions listed earlier:

1. "All cognitions [*Erkenntnisse*], that is, all representations related with consciousness to an object, are either *intuitions* or *concepts*."
2. "Due to the lack of consciousness, even animals are not capable of any concept – intuitions they do have."
3. "For this unitary consciousness is what combines the manifold, successively intuited, and thereupon also reproduced, into one representation. This consciousness may often be only faint, so that we do not connect it with the act itself, that is, not in any direct manner with the *generation* of the representation, but only with the outcome [that which is thereby represented]. But notwithstanding these variations, such consciousness, however indistinct, must always be present; without it, concepts, and therewith cognition [*Erkenntnis*] of objects, are altogether impossible."

The first quotation states that intuitions are cognitions and thus involve objective reference. The third quotation asserts that there can be no cognition without the ability to use concepts, and that the unitary consciousness of the act of combining various representations is necessary for the ability to apply concepts, and thus necessary for all cognition, that is, for all objective reference of representation, and thus also necessary for intuition. The second quotation asserts that animals lack the ability to apply concepts because they lack the ability to become conscious of their own mental activity. It also asserts unambiguously that animals have intuitions. And it is this last conjunct of (2), that animals have intuitions although they lack the right sort of consciousness, that is inconsistent with (1) and (3).

Now (1) and (3) are central to Kant's critical philosophy and entirely typical of much of Kant's thought. On the other hand, (2) is an obscure marginal comment from a set of lecture notes on logic. The obvious way to resolve the inconsistency would be to just throw (2) out as a perhaps unfortunate, but utterly inconsequential misstatement on Kant's part. There are at least two good reasons why this obvious resolution of the inconsistency won't do, however. First, as I tried to point out earlier,

there are very good reasons to think that Kant was right in thinking that animals do in fact intuit objects. And, left at that, this fact, combined with animals' incapacity to apply concepts and engage in reflection, would seem to undercut what Kant has to say about the relation between the possibility of reflective consciousness and the possibility of cognitions with objective reference. Second, in the *Logic*, Kant himself goes out of his way to attempt to provide a place for animal acquaintance with objects, even though he emphasizes in that work that animals don't possess the kind of reflective self-awareness that he maintains is necessary for cognition.

In a passage from the Introduction to the *Logic*, Kant seems to distinguish between two kinds of intuition: a kind of intuition of which animals as well as humans are capable, *kennen*, and a second type, that animals lack, that involves *erkennen*. The passage in which this distinction occurs is one in which Kant is attempting to distinguish the various types of acts of representing.¹⁷ Here is the way in which Kant characterizes the third, fourth, and fifth grades of representing:

The *third*: to be acquainted (*kennen*) with something (*noscere*), or to represent something in comparison with other things, both as to *sameness* and as to *difference*.

The *fourth*: to be acquainted with something *with consciousness*, i.e., to *cognize* (*erkennen*) it (*cognoscere*). Animals are *acquainted* with objects too, but they do not *cognize* them.

The *fifth*: to *understand* (*verstehen*) something (*intelligere*), i.e., to *cognize* something *through the understanding by means of concepts*. . . .¹⁸

In this passage Kant replaces his familiar two-part distinction between intuition and concepts as two types of representations with a three-part division among kinds of representing: being acquainted with things, cognizing things, and cognizing things by way of concepts, or understanding them. He does not inform us in this passage regarding the representations associated with the third and fourth grades of representing, although he does specify that the fifth grade is attained by means of concepts. However, given the fact that Kant always identifies the two kinds of cognitions as intuitions and concepts, that he always asserts that cognitions in general are representations related with consciousness to an object, and that he specifies that the fourth grade, *erkennen*, is being acquainted with

¹⁷ It is a bit disconcerting that in this catalog Kant uses *Erkenntnis* for the genus 'act of representation', rather than restricting it to acts involving cognitions in the narrower sense of those involving objective reference.

¹⁸ Kant (1992), *Jäsche Logic*, Introduction, sec. VII, 569–70.

something with consciousness, there can be little doubt that he means to suggest that to cognize or (perhaps better in this context) recognize something without the use of concepts is to have an intuition of that thing. And this, at one fell swoop, solves the riddle concerning animal sapience (or so it seems), as Kant is quick to point out. Animals don't *intuit* objects, they don't relate to objects with *consciousness* in such a way as to recognize them; they merely are acquainted with objects, and this lower level of representation neither requires the ability to use concepts nor involves genuine cognition of objects. Animals have intuitions_a, so to speak, not intuitions. On this view, animals can have a *kind* of relation to objects without its being the case that they can have intuitions; the ability to use concepts can be necessary for the ability to have intuitions, even though animals can't use concepts. And when Kant suggests in other contexts that animals have intuitions, he is merely, and innocuously, using the term loosely and ambiguously between intuitions and intuitions_a.

There is a short, and not very informative, way to see why this explicitly Kantian solution to the riddle of animal sapience won't work, and there is a rather longer and more informative way to see why it won't work. Here is the short way. As laid out here, the notion of *kennen*, or acquaintance with things, straddles the canonical distinction in the *Critique* between subjective modifications of a subject's states, or sensation, and *Erkenntnisse*, or *objective* perceptions. But Kant can't have it both ways. Either *kennen*, as opposed to *erkennen*, involves representing an object as distinct from the representation of the object, or it doesn't. If it doesn't, then in what respect is *kennen* an acquaintance with a *thing*? If it does, then how does the fact that animals are capable of *kennen*, and thus can represent objects, square with the claim that representation with consciousness and the ability to form judgments is necessary for intending objects? The problem is that intuition differs from mere sensation precisely insofar as it is the apprehension of an *object* and to be an object is to be distinct from the representation of the object. But cognition, as a type of representing, is the representing of an object. So one can't be acquainted with an *object* without having a cognition of an object.

The key to understanding Kant's attempted strategy for handling this new form of his dilemma is contained in his characterization of the abilities involved in *kennen*. And this leads to the long, and informative, way of seeing what is wrong with Kant's solution. To be acquainted with something is "to represent something in comparison with other things, both as to sameness and difference." We can see what Kant is driving at if we look at the famous passage from the *Logic* that I quoted earlier, in which he

specifies the acts of the understanding “through which concepts are generated as to their form.” “The logical *actus* of the understanding, through which concepts are generated as to their form, are: 1. *comparison* of representations among one another in relation to the unity of consciousness; 2. *reflection* as to how various representations can be conceived in one consciousness; and finally 3. *abstraction* of everything else in which the given representations differ.”¹⁹

When one compares this passage from the *Logic* with the earlier one, what is immediately striking is that Kant uses the same term, ‘comparison’ (*Vergleichung*), in both passages. The most basic act of the understanding that is necessary for generating concepts is the act of comparison. Similarly, the act that is characteristic of animal acquaintance with objects is also described as comparison. It is only later that one recognizes that in these two passages Kant is in fact *distinguishing* two types of comparison, and that this distinction is meant to dissolve the aporia I have cited. When we see why this attempted solution fails, we will also be able to see the only possible solution to Kant’s, and our, dilemma.

Now, according to Kant in the *Logic*, animals are *acquainted* with objects. And this implies that they have the ability to represent something in comparison with other things, both as to similarity and difference. In the division of kinds of acts of representation in the *Logic*, Kant distinguishes *kennen* from *erkennen*, acquaintance from cognition or recognition, by treating the latter as a species of the former, a species whose differentia is *consciousness*: “to be acquainted with something *with consciousness*, i.e., to *cognize* it.” It is this representational ability that distinguishes human cognition of objects from animal acquaintance with objects. But what is this distinction? In the second passage concerning the acts of the understanding through which concepts are generated as to their form, the first act, comparison, necessarily involves a relation to the unity of consciousness. What ‘comparison’ entails *in this context* is a comparison of representations among one another *in relation to the unity of consciousness*. So, implicitly, Kant is contrasting *two* kinds of comparison. One kind, the type practiced by mere animals, specifically does not occur *with consciousness*. The other, the act of the understanding that is necessary for generating the form of a concept (universality), is an act of representation ‘in relation to the unity of consciousness’. And it is just this difference, the difference between acts of comparison with and without consciousness, or relation to the unity of consciousness, that is supposed

¹⁹ Ibid., Sec. 6, 592.

to mark the difference between cognition and acquaintance, human and animal.

So it turns out that for Kant the two types of intuition broached earlier, intuition proper and intuition_a, are supposed to be distinct in virtue of their relation to the unity of consciousness. But what does this difference in the character of intuitions amount to? We can answer this question if we focus on the context in *The Logic* in which Kant discusses “comparison . . . in relation to the unity of consciousness”. “The second passage I have been citing occurs in the course of a discussion of the acts of the understanding “through which concepts are generated as to their form”. Now, of course, the most salient difference between humans and animals such as my dog is that we are capable of generating and applying concepts, and animals are not. It is just this difference that is also marked in the distinction of *kennen*, the animal intuition that is acquainted with things in a way that compares them as to sameness and difference, and *erkennen*, the human intuition that is acquainted with things *with consciousness*. Intuition proper, human acquaintance with things with consciousness, allows for the generation of concepts; intuition_a, animal intuition without consciousness, which is the mere comparison of things as to sameness and difference, does not. In the note to the second passage, Kant gives us what appears to be a perfect example of what is involved in making a comparison with consciousness, the kind of comparison that allows for the generation of concepts. “I see, e.g., a spruce, a willow, and a linden. By first comparing these objects with one another I note that they are different from one another in regard to the trunk, the branches, the leaves, etc . . .”²⁰ In the human, cognitive, case, to represent something in comparison with other things is to compare those things so as to “note that they are different from (same as) one another in regard to . . .”. Such a representing thus involves, in addition to the representations of the things represented, a ‘noting’, a ‘noticing’, of the sameness or difference of the representations and such a noting is a noting of sameness or difference *in some respect or other*. While animals have intuitions in which they compare things as to sameness and difference, humans have intuitions in which they compare things as to sameness and difference in some respect or other.

As we have seen, Kant characterizes the kind of acquaintance with objects that notices respects in which things differ as “acquaintance with consciousness” and as involving “comparison . . . in relation to the unity of

²⁰ Ibid.

consciousness.” Noticing the respect in which willows and lindens resemble and differ from one another involves a relation to the unity of consciousness because such noticing acts require that the representations of the willow and the linden be combined or synthesized. It is a necessary feature of my comparison of the representations of the willow and the linden with respect to their trunks that I represent them together in a single intentional act. I represent them together in such a single act when I take neither of them as my intentional object, but rather when I “note”, or represent, their similarity in some respect. To do this is to represent together in a new act the two acts in which I have represented the willow and the linden; it is to perform an act of synthesis. But in the case in which I notice that the willow and the linden differ in respect to their trunks, this synthesis occurs *with recognition*, the recognition of the respect in which the trees differ. I synthesize the two representations *by* intending that they differ regarding their trunks: The recognition accomplishes the synthesis. In both the A and B Transcendental Deductions, Kant argues that such a recognizing consciousness is possible only insofar as it is possible for the subject to be conscious of the act in which the representations are synthesized.²¹ And in both editions, this ability in turn is seen to depend upon the ability to reflectively relate one’s representations with the unity of consciousness. Thus human cognition (*Erkenntnis*), even in its intuitive form in which we intuit the differences among things in some regard or other, requires acts of recognition (*erkennen*), and acts of recognition always involve a relation to the unity of consciousness.

So for Kant, to carry out a “comparison of representations in relation to the unity of consciousness” is to represent two representations together so as to be able to note their similarities and differences in some respect or other. In the note to Section 6 of the *Jäsche Logic*, Kant tells us that “to make concepts out of representations one must be able to compare.” That is, in order to intend the concept ‘trunk’, for example, one must be able to compare representations of trees with trunks so as to come to note the respect in which they are both similar and different. Since this comparison is necessary for *generating* or ‘making’ the concept ‘trunk’, the representation in which the comparison is carried out cannot itself be fully conceptual. The suggested *origin* of the concept demands that I be able to compare the willow and the linden in respect of their trunks *even while I lack the concept ‘trunk’*. Thus, what is required in order to generate the empirical concept ‘trunk’ is the *intuitive* ability to compare,

²¹ Cf., for example, A103 and B130.

in relation to the unity of consciousness, the intuitions of, say, a willow and a linden. Such an act of comparison involves a relation to the unity of consciousness insofar as, as a synthetic act, it essentially involves the possibility that the agent of the act can become conscious of the activity in which it generates the unity of the two intuitions in the comparison, and thus can become conscious of the rule, or concept, it follows in performing the act of comparison. Although humans need not be explicitly conscious of the concepts that are implicitly operative in their intuitive acts of comparison, the fact that those comparisons are carried out in relation to the unity of consciousness implies that they are always capable of forming the discursive judgments that are intuitively made present in acts that compare intuitions.

Animals, according to Kant, lack the ability to generate concepts or form discursive judgments. As such, they also lack the ability to be acquainted with something *with consciousness*. They lack the ability to note, or notice, the respects in which things differ. Kant thinks this because he believes that it is a corollary of his observation that animals lack the capacity to judge. For Kant, animals can intuitively grasp differences and similarities among things, but they can never intend the respects in which things are similar or different. Animals, for Kant, can note *that* two objects differ, but they can never note or notice *how* they differ, or the way in which those objects differ. That is, for Kant, animals can never become conscious of the unity of the act of comparison in and through which the synthetic representation (in which the representations of the willow and the linden are compared) is produced. And this is precisely the respect in which animal and human intuition differs for Kant. While animals do compare intuitions, they lack the type of intuition necessary to form concepts, and thus can never represent the respect in which they carry out this comparison.

Unfortunately, this is no solution to the problem of animal sapience. It only regenerates the same aporia we have been following right along. In addition to representations of the items involved in the comparison, *every* act of comparison, whether animal or human, as an act of comparison, *must* involve an intention directed toward the relation between the items intended, their similarity or difference. On Kant's account, animals do note similarities and differences between things. Mac does not only see the house and the bus differently. He also *sees* their difference, even if he can never intend any particular way in which they differ and can never become conscious of the specific differences between them. And such an animal act of comparison necessarily involves a synthesis of the

representations that are compared in the act. Now either such a synthetic act necessarily involves the possibility on the part of the agent of the act to engage in the type of reflection that Kant calls consciousness, and thus the ability to use concepts, or it does not. If it does, then animals can't be acquainted with objects, because they can't perform comparisons, and for Kant this is the minimal ability necessary for acquaintance with objects. That is, they can't have intuitions in any sense at all. If such synthetic acts don't require the ability on the part of the agent to reflect and form concepts, then such abilities are not necessary for intentions directed towards objects. So Kant's "two kinds of intuition" solution to his problem can't possibly work.

4. CONCLUSION

What has gone wrong? The short answer to this question is that the problem of animal sapience points to a deep problem in the way in which Kant tends to report his own results. As I emphasized earlier, it is absolutely central to the Kantian project that we see what we judge, that the objects we perceptually encounter have, and must have, the same structural character as the objects about which we form judgments. It is only for this reason that Kant can conclude that we can have a priori knowledge of objects of possible experience, that is, a priori knowledge of the objects that we can *intuit*. We can know that the pure concepts of the understanding can validly be applied to the objects of intuition only because the forms of unity that make it possible to intuit an object are the very same forms of unity that allow us to judge that object: "The same function which gives unity to the various representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of representations in an intuition. . . ." Kant assigns to the faculty of imagination the ability to relate or synthesize sensible presentations so as to present us with the intuition of an object. As we are *presented* with intuitions of objects (and even more fundamentally with the pure intuitions of space and time in which the intuitions of objects are arranged), and we are not conscious of any activity on our part as necessary for such presentations, Kant says that imagination is a blind, unconscious faculty. The operation of this faculty thus does not require that we be conscious of its operation.

At this point, however, we can finally see what has gone wrong with Kant's attempts to solve the aporia. In the footnote to Section 6 of the *Logic*, Kant says that by comparing the willow and the linden with one another, I note that they are different from one another in regard

to . . . For such a noticing to be possible, it certainly must be possible for me to reflect on the way in which I represent the trees together in the comparison. And so for me to be able to generate and apply concepts in judgments, I must be capable of becoming conscious of the respect in which the comparison is carried out, that is, self-conscious of the unity of the act of synthesis through which the act of comparison is performed. Without the possibility of becoming conscious of the unity of the act in which I generate the comparison with respect to sameness and difference, the synthesis of recognition in a concept is “altogether impossible.” But, strictly, this fact provides us with no reason to think that the ability to notice the respects in which I compare the representations of trees is necessary for me to be able to *compare the representations of trees*. On Kant’s own account, my dog Mac can and does compare his sensible representations of trees in regard to their sameness and difference, but lacks the ability to ever intend how they are different. So the second, recognizing, ability cannot be necessary for the first ability, the ability to be acquainted with difference and similarity. On the other hand, it is quite implausible to believe that a subject could have the ability to represent or notice the respect in which trees are the same or different without also having the ability to intend that they are the same or differ. If I were not intuitively acquainted with the trees in such a way that I could in some manner represent their being similar or different, if I lacked the representational ability that Kant calls *kennen*, then I could not form concepts. But Kant has given us no reason to believe that such *kennen* requires the possibility of *erkennen*, the capacity to note the respect in which the comparison is carried out. Before we can be rational creatures who possess the discursive capacity to judge regarding the respects in which objects differ and are the same as one another, we must be animals who possess the intuitive ability to represent the similarity and difference of objects. That is, we must be able to *see* those similarities and differences.

In effect, the aporia arises out of Kant’s failure to distinguish rigorously between two distinct capacities. The capacity to have a unitary representation of the outcome of an act of synthesis, by having a single representation of that which is represented through that act, is logically distinct from the capacity to represent the act itself, which generates such a unitary representation. Kant’s willingness to admit that animals can compare things in respect to their similarity and difference, although they lack the ability to form and apply concepts, displays the fact that having the ability to intend the character of the act that generates a synthesis of representations – the ability that is necessary for the use of concepts – is in no

way necessary for the generation of such a synthesis. And for this reason, the reflective capacity to attach the 'I think' to our representations, while necessary for those representations to be anything for me, is not a necessary condition for our being able to represent objects as objects.

Kant argues that it is only in the representation that *is* the concept, the representation of the unity of the act of synthesis, that the act of synthesizing various representations is in fact carried out.²² That is, the unitary representation of the comparative relation between the two trees *is* the conceptual, recognizing representation of the manner in which they are the same and different. This is the cash value of the crucial claim that without "such [reflective] consciousness . . . cognition of objects is altogether impossible." But insofar as it is the case that there can be intuitions that represent objects, and it is possible for non-concept-using animals to be acquainted with the similarities and differences of these intuitively presented objects, this just *can't* be right. And we are given no independent reason for thinking that the ability to recognize the manner in which things are similar and different is necessary for being acquainted with their being similar and different.

Having said this, it does not follow that we have a good grasp on what is involved in having a nonconceptual intuitive grasp of difference and similarity. The fact that my dog is acquainted with objects, although he lacks our facility with concepts, guarantees that such nonconceptual intuition of similarity and difference occurs. Fully understanding what is entailed by this fact regarding the nature of both conceptual and nonconceptual cognition, however, is another matter entirely.

So we have come to a perhaps surprising conclusion. We started with an inconsistent triad of Kantian views: 1. Intuitions involve a reference to an object. 2. Animals, although they lack the ability to apply concepts, have intuitions. 3. Cognition of objects requires a unitary consciousness of the act through which a manifold is combined and the ability to apply concepts. The surprising conclusion we have reached is that to resolve this inconsistency Kant should give up (3), the claim that cognition of objects requires the possibility of conceptual, judgmental cognition. Discursive understanding is only possible on the basis of the intuitive presentation of objects, the possibility of such an understanding is not necessary for the possibility of such an intuition, and it is only possible to articulate what is

²² Kant, of course, explicitly adopts this position in the B edition Transcendental Deduction, most notably in Section 26, where he asserts that the figurative transcendental synthesis of the imagination is the effect of the understanding on the imagination.

involved in discursive understanding by first articulating what is involved in intuitively presenting objects. I take it that this is what Heidegger meant when he said that “intuition is the original building site of all knowledge, to which all thinking is directed as a means.”²³

What does Mac see when he sees a bus? He sees an object, of course. And the object that he sees is an object that he would describe as a big, smelly, moving, noisy one; that is, he would describe it in that way if he could *describe* it at all. Because he would be *right* to describe that object in that way, if he were able to describe it, he *sees* that this object is different from that other object that he would describe as a house if he could describe it. And because he sees this difference, he responds to them in quite different ways, even though he could never say, or judge, how these objects are different. Mac also sees the difference between me and the bus. But, this is quite a different difference from the difference between the bus and the house, and Mac is aware of this as well, thank goodness.

²³ Heidegger (1997), 58.

PART TWO

THE COGNITIVE STRUCTURE OF AESTHETIC
JUDGMENT

Dialogue: Paul Guyer and Henry Allison on Allison's *Kant's Theory of Taste*

REMARKS ON HENRY ALLISON'S *KANT'S THEORY OF TASTE* BY
PAUL GUYER

In *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*,¹ Henry Allison has provided a detailed study of the two introductions and the first half of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* to stand alongside his previous volumes on Kant's theoretical and practical philosophy, his *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* of 1983 and *Kant's Theory of Freedom* of 1990.² Allison is as deeply committed to the unity and coherence of Kant's thought as any contemporary interpreter of his philosophy, and it is a major aim of the present book to demonstrate the deep connections between the two halves of Kant's third *Critique*, that is, Kant's aesthetics and his teleology, as well as to demonstrate the profound connections between Kant's aesthetic theory and his theoretical philosophy on the one hand as well as his practical philosophy on the other.

I focus here on Allison's defense of Kant's general conception of reflective judgment and the principle of purposiveness, his defense of Kant's deduction of pure judgments of taste, and his interpretation of Kant's connection between aesthetics and morality. In the following section I recap those parts of *Kant's Theory of Taste* that take up these three topics, and in the section after that I discuss several points of difference between his views and mine in each case. In order to defend the unity of the third *Critique*, Allison defends Kant's characterization of the judgment of

¹ Allison (2001), xvi, 424. In this essay, page references to *Kant's Theory of Taste* will be given parenthetically, without further identification.

² Allison (1983); Allison (1990).

taste as a species of reflective judgment, and argues that our judgments of beauty do indeed depend upon the principle of the purposiveness of nature that is also the key to the judgments about the systematicity of natural laws analyzed in the introductions to the work as well as to the judgments about objective purposiveness analyzed in its second half. To display the connections between Kant's aesthetics and his theoretical philosophy, Allison uses the first *Critique's* distinction between the *quid facti* and the *quid juris*, the analysis of the content or meaning of particular forms of judgment and the justification of using such forms of judgment, to explicate the relation between Kant's Analytic of the Beautiful and his Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgment, and then defends the success of Kant's strategy for the deduction of judgments of taste by grounding them in the general conditions of the possibility of cognition. Finally, in order to explain Kant's connection between aesthetics and morality, Allison interprets Kant's theory of the "intellectual interest" in the beautiful as evidence of nature's amenability to our achievement of the ends of morality, an assurance that we need not in order to be motivated to act as morality requires but rather to prevent our motivation to be moral from being undermined by our own predisposition to radical evil, and then defends Kant's thesis that all beauty, and thus natural as well as artistic beauty, can be seen as an expression of aesthetic ideas, and specifically of the morally requisite idea of nature's amenability to the achievement of our moral objectives.

I

Allison explores the connection between "Reflective Judgment and the Purposiveness of Nature" (13) in Chapter 1 of *Kant's Theory of Taste*. He bases his account on Kant's definition of reflection in the First Introduction to the third *Critique* as the activity of comparing and holding together given representations "either with others or with one's faculty of cognition" (20, citing *FI* 20:211).³ This definition of reflection links aesthetic judgment with other forms of reflective judgment: The comparison of perceptual representations with each other is the basis for the formation

³ Citations from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*CPJ*) or its so-called First Introduction (*FI*) will be located by volume and page number as in the Akademie edition. Allison generally follows the translation by Werner Pluhar (1987). Unless quoting directly from Allison, I will quote from Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (2000). Both of these translations provide the Akademie edition pagination.

of empirical concepts of objects in nature, a process that is structured by the *a priori* concepts of the pure understanding (the categories) but by no means fully determined by those concepts, while the comparison of particular perceptual representations with one's own faculties of cognition is the basis for judgments of taste. The heart of Allison's argument in Chapter 1 is that Kant replies to Hume's doubts about the uniformity of nature over time, and thus about the very possibility of reliable empirical concept formation, with a principle of purposiveness, which claims "not that nature is purposive, that is, that we have some sort of *a priori* guarantee that it is ordered in a manner commensurate with our cognitive capacities and needs," but rather that "we are rationally constrained to approach nature *as if* it were so ordered"; "in Kant's own terms, at the basis of all reflection on nature (the search for empirical laws) lies the *a priori* principle that 'a cognizable order of nature in terms of these [empirical] laws is possible' " (39, citing *CPI*, 5:185). This principle is thought of as having "normative or prescriptive force" (40), although it prescribes not to nature but to the faculty of judgment itself, and is thus a principle of heteronomy rather than autonomy (41). This principle seems to be necessary simply because it is irrational to engage in an activity, such as scientific inquiry, without some form of assurance that success in that activity is at least possible: "It is *right*, that is, rationally justified, to presuppose the principle of purposiveness because judgment legislates it to itself as a condition of the possibility of its self-appointed task" (41).

Chapters 7 and 8 present Allison's account of Kant's deduction of pure aesthetic judgments. In Chapter 7, Allison argues that the fourth moment does not introduce an additional condition for the *quid facti*, but rather "provides a unifying focus for the conditions that must be met, if a judgment of taste is to be pure" (144). The heart of his argument in this section, however, is his claim that "the argument of §21 for the necessity of presupposing a common sense, though not itself part of the deduction of taste, nonetheless . . . provides grounds for postulating a cognitive capacity that is a necessary (though not a sufficient) condition of the possibility of taste" and "removes a worry generated by the account of the conditions of a pure judgment of taste that the very idea of a common sense . . . might be incoherent" (145). The gist of Allison's interpretation is that the "capacity to judge" fits between a manifold of imagination and the faculty of understanding by means of feeling is the condition of the possibility of *any* cognition, for if we always needed a concept in order to judge whether a concept fit a manifold, we would be saddled with an infinite regress (154). The argument of §21 thus prepares the way for

the argument of §38, discussed in Chapter 8, where Kant infers from the premises that the sufficient conditions of aesthetic judgment are also the necessary conditions for cognition in general, and that we are justified in presupposing the latter in everyone the conclusion that if an object “is subjectively purposive for me, then it must be subjectively purposive for everyone” (176). This is the answer to the *quid juris*, although, of course, invoking it in the case of any particular judgment presupposes that the *quid facti* has been satisfactorily answered, that is, that the particular judgment one has made is in fact a pure judgment of taste. In this chapter, Allison rebuts my criticism that Kant’s deduction is a failure because it does not show that the free harmony of the faculties must occur in everyone in response to the same particular objects, or even that everyone who is capable of achieving a harmony of the cognitive faculties under the guidance of concepts must also be able to achieve it without such guidance, on the ground that I expect the deduction to answer the *quid facti* rather than the *quid juris* (180–2).

Allison presents his interpretation of Kant’s connection between aesthetics and morality in Part III of *Kant’s Theory of Taste*, arguing that the premise for Kant’s connection is that it is “a central, though frequently overlooked, feature of Kant’s moral theory . . . that the moral law dictates the pursuit of certain ends” (203): The primary way in which aesthetic experience is conducive to morality will then be that such experience, as experience of the purposiveness of nature, gives us some general evidence that nature is conducive to the realization of our ends, even our moral ends, which conviction can then prevent our motivation to act as morality requires from being undermined by fears of the futility of so acting, fears that can all too easily be exploited by our own disposition to radical evil. Allison argues that Kant’s antinomy of taste – the apparent conflict between the thesis that judgments of taste cannot be proven from concepts but must yet in some way be based on concepts for it to be rational for us to quarrel about them (239) – cannot be resolved simply by appeal to the indeterminate character of the concept of the harmony of the cognitive faculties, which could explain how both thesis and antithesis can be true, but also requires the recognition that an essentially indeterminable concept is in fact an idea of reason and thus an idea of the supersensible (248). He claims that Kant is right to assert in §51 that the experience of natural as well as artistic beauty points us to this supersensible idea of reason as the basis of the essentially indeterminable concept of the harmony of the faculties, and that Kant’s thesis in §59 that beauty is the symbol of the morally good depends “precisely” on

the premise that “aesthetic ideas . . . indirectly exhibit ideas of reason (in virtue of their analogous ways of gesturing to the supersensible” (257). The recognition that taste has a supersensible foundation thus facilitates “the thought of oneself as a member of an ideal community subject to a universally valid norm” (265) and is conducive to morality for that reason. Since the experience of beauty is not the unique way in which one could come to have this self-conception, however, this analogy cannot ground a strict duty that everyone have or develop taste, but only “a duty, as it were, or an indirect duty” (265).

II

(i) Reflective Judgment and the Principle of Purposiveness

Here I want to raise three issues.

First, I do not think that Allison has convincingly shown that we actually employ the principle of purposiveness, that is, the assumption that nature is commensurate with our cognitive capacities, even in its merely “heautonomous” form, in the process of making judgments of taste. In fact, Allison has not actually specified what role this principle plays in searching for a system of empirical concepts of nature except to suggest that our conviction of this principle, by assuring us of the possibility of success in scientific inquiry, is necessary to motivate us in the conduct of that inquiry. I have myself argued that the principle of purposiveness plays a more complex role in the conduct of scientific inquiry than that; on my account, the transcendental assumption that nature itself is systematic and thus amenable to the logical systematization of our concepts of it does not merely buck us up when our scientific energies might falter, but also gives us some specific guidance in the construction and testing of empirical hypotheses (where empirical data underdetermine empirical hypotheses, at least begin by testing those that fit better into a system of currently confirmed laws rather than those that fit less well), and the membership of a particular lawlike generalization in a system of empirical laws also gives some basis for the ascription of necessity to that generalization.⁴ But the principle of purposiveness appears to play none of these roles, neither that to which Allison points nor those that I have analyzed in the case of judgments of taste. Kant connects our pleasure in a beautiful object with the fact that the harmony in our experience of its manifold does not appear to follow from any concept or rule, and thus appears

⁴ See Guyer (1990a) and (1990b).

to us entirely “contingent” and unintentional (*CPJ*, 5:188). This means that an *antecedent* conviction that nature is commensurate with our cognitive capacities, which is what the principle of purposiveness amounts to, plays no role in our experience of beauty; if anything, such a conviction would block the experience of beauty, making the harmony between the manifold presented by the object and our own cognitive requirements seem necessary rather than contingent. In confirmation of this point, one might note the “direction of fit” in Kant’s explanation of the intellectual interest in beauty: It must be the experience of natural beauty that provides a hint that nature is amenable to our moral ends, rather than an experience of nature’s amenability to our moral ends that provides a hint of natural beauty, precisely because the existence of beauty must not appear to derive from any more general rule if it is to strike us as thoroughly contingent and unexpected. Beyond this, since the judgment of taste must be free from determination by concepts, the process of making a judgment of taste cannot derive any guidance from the principle of purposiveness in the way that the conduct of scientific inquiry can derive guidance from the conception of nature as systematic. That conception leads us to formulate and prefer certain concepts of nature over others, at least for the purposes of testing, on the ground that they fit better with a larger system. But the assumption that beauty is purposiveness gives us no particular guidance in trying to discern whether a particular object is beautiful. If one likes, one might say that the conception of purposiveness of form tells us to focus on the form of an object in attempting to judge whether it is beautiful, but the term ‘purposiveness’ does not really give us any additional guidance; it does not tell us what to look for in the form. The recommendation that we should look for purposiveness of form does not tell us anything about how we should go about searching for harmony between imagination and understanding. ‘Purposiveness’ is just a label that can be applied to that condition, which is detected without any guidance from the principle of purposiveness at all. To be sure, the label of subjective purposiveness offers us enlightenment about his *explanation* of our pleasure in beauty: It connotes the fact that the harmony of the faculties pleases us because it is an unexpected satisfaction of our general goal or purpose in cognition. So we can admit a principle of purposiveness as part of Kant’s explanation of aesthetic response; but no such principle plays any role in actually making particular judgments of taste.

My second worry about Allison’s account of reflective judgment concerns his suggestion that feeling can be equated with the capacity to judge.

I agree that the capacity to judge, specifically to judge that empirical concepts apply to perceptual objects, ultimately requires perceptual abilities to apply predicates that cannot themselves derive any further guidance from concepts: For example, to apply the concept 'red book' to volumes in my library, I simply have to be able to *see* which ones are bound in red, as opposed to blue, yellow, and green. No further rules can help me here. But, of course, Kant is concerned to distinguish pleasure and pain as subjective states that cannot become predicates of objects from other subjective states, such as the sensations of colors, which can (*CPJ*, §1, 5:203–4), and it is not obvious that the patently discriminative function that can be assigned to those subjective states that can become predicates of objects should also be assigned to those that cannot. Perhaps feelings of pleasure and pain must remain thoroughly subjective precisely because they are not by themselves *sufficient* to ground judgments about objects, at least beyond the simple judgments that those objects cause pleasure or pain.

What would it mean for a feeling of pleasure or pain to be in and of itself a capacity to judge or discriminate? One thing it might naturally be thought to mean is that the feeling is a sufficient condition for making a judgment, and thus that a feeling of pleasure is a sufficient condition for judging that something is beautiful and a feeling of displeasure is a sufficient condition for judging that something is ugly. For this to be the case, it would in turn be necessary that feelings of pleasure in beauty are phenomenologically distinguishable from all other feelings of pleasure, and feelings of displeasure at ugliness are phenomenologically distinct from all other feelings of displeasure. But I at least have never been able to find evidence that Kant believed this, although others of his time, such as Hume, apparently did. Kant explicitly asserts that there are "three different relations of representations to the feeling of pleasure in displeasure, in relation to which we distinguish objects or kinds of representations from each other," namely, as agreeable, beautiful, or good (*CPJ*, §5, 5:209–10), but he gives no hint that there is any phenomenologically evident or qualitative difference between the feelings of pleasure in these different cases themselves. Instead, his view seems to be that in order to make a judgment of taste we have to exclude other possible causes, namely interests, for our feeling of pleasure in an object. But this is precisely to say that the occurrence of a feeling of pleasure is not by itself a sufficient condition for making a judgment of taste, and thus it seems peculiar to equate a feeling of pleasure with a capacity to judge beauty. The occurrence of a feeling of pleasure is a necessary condition

for making a judgment of beauty, and that makes such a judgment an aesthetic judgment (see 54), but it is not sufficient.

This is why my interpretation of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment is aptly called a 'causal' interpretation: Judging that an object is beautiful on the basis of a feeling of pleasure is analogous to judging that an effect is caused by one sort of cause rather than another. I have never denied that there are some elements of Kant's view that speak against such an interpretation; in particular, in §12 he seems to deny that the connection between a particular object and our pleasure in it can be causal because a causal relation must be *a priori*, while this connection is *a posteriori* (*CPJ*, §12, 5:221–2). But this does not seem to be a serious problem: If we take Kant's appeal to the *a priori* here to be an expression of the necessary law-likeness of causal connections, we could allow that the relation between the harmony of the faculties and the feeling of pleasure is lawlike, even though it follows from the very concept of an unintended and apparently contingent harmony that there can be no lawlike relation between the forms of objects that allow us to realize this harmony and the harmony itself. In any case, the virtue of the causal interpretation, at least as I see it, is that the fact that we have to judge that an object is beautiful indirectly and by exclusion, that is, by excluding sensory or moral interests as alternative causes, and that the latter cannot be done with certainty is precisely what explains the fact, which Kant stresses, that particular judgments of taste are themselves never certain. Allison accepts Kant's insistence on this point, but I am not sure what his own explanation of it is given his apparent assumption that feelings of pleasure or displeasure are sufficient conditions for making aesthetic judgments.

This is related to the last of my present points, which is simply that I find Allison's claim that the feeling of pleasure in a judgment of taste possesses "intentionality" (53) undeveloped and unsustainable. Allison does not deny that the feeling of pleasure in a beautiful object is an effect of the harmony of faculties that object allows, but he denies that it is "simply the effect of such a harmony" because "it is also the very means through which one becomes aware of this harmony" (54). But that by itself does not imply that such a feeling has any internal content or structure that determines its reference, which is how I would interpret the traditional conception of intentionality. An effect is often precisely how we become aware of a cause even when that effect clearly has no intentionality, at least if we have enough other evidence to interpret that effect as a *sign* of its cause. For example, a mushroom cloud might be the effect of either a small nuclear device or a large volcanic eruption, but if we can exclude

one of these possible causes, say the first, by radiological data, then the effect can also be taken as the sign of the other. Allison would have to provide an account of the internal structure of a feeling of pleasure, which makes it by itself a sign of the harmony of the faculties, or of subjective purposiveness in order to undermine the interpretation that it is a sign of such a thing when but only when other possible causes of it can be excluded.

(ii) *The Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments*

Here I want to make two points. First, I want to stress that although there are differences in terminology and detail, there is no substantive disagreement in our approaches to the strategy of the Analytic of the Beautiful and its relation to the deduction of aesthetic judgments. But then I want to explain why Allison has not convinced me that the deduction itself is more successful than I have argued it is.

As I have noted, Allison organizes his account of the relation between the Analytic and the Deduction around the contrast between the *quid facti* and the *quid juris*: The moments of the Analytic answer the *quid facti* by analyzing the meaning or content of the concept of a pure judgment of taste, and thereby telling us what conditions any particular judgment must satisfy in order to count as a pure judgment of taste, rather than, say, a mere report of sensory agreeableness or a masked judgment of instrumental or moral goodness; the *quid juris*, however, is answered by the deduction, which, by arguing for the universality of the conditions for the occurrence of the harmony of the faculties, justifies the demand for universal agreement to any particular judgment that is in fact a pure judgment of taste. Since I found both 'defining' and 'justificatory criteria' among the four moments of the Analytic,⁵ it may seem as if I failed to distinguish between the roles of the Analytic and the Deduction, or the tasks of satisfying the *quid facti* on the one hand and the *quid juris* on the other. And indeed, in his rebuttal of my critique of the deduction, Allison accuses me of precisely this error, that is, of confusing the task of justifying the claim that a particular judgment is a pure judgment of taste with that of justifying the claim of universal validity for any pure judgment of taste, and of mistakenly concluding that the deduction is a failure because it does not accomplish the former as well as the latter (180–2).

⁵ See Guyer (1997a), 108.

But the differences in our terminology for describing the function of the moments of the Analytic make what I believe are only minor differences in detail in our interpretations. What I had in mind by distinguishing between defining and justificatory criteria was the following model. The moments of subjective universality and exemplary necessity define a judgment of taste insofar as what I mean by calling an object beautiful is that I take it to have produced a feeling of pleasure in me, independently of its being subsumed under any concept or rule, which I can nevertheless suppose would necessarily occur in any other normal human being, at least under normal circumstances.⁶ That the necessity of agreement about the feeling of pleasure produced by an object independently of its subsumption under a concept is what is meant by calling an object beautiful, I argued, is suggested by the fact that it is in the exposition of the second moment of the Analytic that Kant most explicitly appeals to our ordinary linguistic practices in support of his analysis. By contrast, that a judgment of taste is disinterested and that it should be a response to the purposiveness of form in an object are not (or, in the case of disinterestedness, should not be) treated by Kant as parts of the *meaning* of the term 'beautiful' or of the concept of a judgment of taste, but are rather factors to which we can appeal in the justification of a particular judgment of taste, that is, in the assessment of a particular feeling of pleasure as pleasure in the beauty of an object. They are such conditions because they are factors associated with the free play of the cognitive faculties: The purposiveness of form in an object is what induces such a condition, and the disinterestedness of the judgment of taste is a consequence of it. This should make it clear that in calling disinterestedness and purposiveness of form 'justificatory criteria,' I did not mean that they preempt the task of the deduction: They are used to justify the assertion of any particular judgment of taste on the basis of the pleasure actually felt in an object because of their association with the harmony of the faculties, but the task of proving that the harmony of the faculties must occur in the same way and under the same conditions for everyone, and thus that of justifying the general practice of making judgments of taste, awaits the deduction proper. But that means that, at least in general

⁶ Contrary to what Allison suggests, I did not claim that the second and fourth moments of the Analytic make what is essentially the same claim because I identified the concepts of (subjective) universality (the subject of the second moment) and (exemplary) necessity (that of the fourth) (78–82), but rather because I believed both moments together to state that a judgment of taste asserts the necessity of the subjective universality or universal communicability asserted by a judgment of taste. See Guyer (1997a), 142–5.

terms, I distinguish between the tasks of discharging the *quid facti* and the *quid juris* in the same way that Allison does.

Now, we might still argue over whether the disinterestedness of judgments of taste and the formalism of beauty are actually included in the meaning of the concept of beauty, as Allison contends, or not, as I do. I might be persuaded that Kant at least intended that in the case of disinterestedness, although I continue to think there are good reasons why, historically, he should not have; I think there is less room for debate in the case of purposiveness of form. But space will not allow the pursuit of this issue, so at this point I will turn instead to the question of the success of the deduction itself. In *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, I argued that Kant attempted to prove that the free play of the cognitive faculties would be induced in ideal observers by the same particular objects twice, first in §21, in the course of the exposition of the fourth moment of the Analytic, and then in §38, in the Deduction proper, but that Kant's argument was in both cases inadequate. Allison argues that §21 and §38 have different functions and that each argument is successful. The point of §21, he contends, is to prove that all normal human beings have a *general* capacity for common sense, which is just the ability to subsume intuitions under concepts by means of feeling and without the guidance of further concepts, which makes no direct claim about taste (153–4). Only in §38, he claims, does Kant take the further step of arguing that if everyone must have the same ability to subsume intuitions under concepts by means of feeling rather than rules, then they must also have the same ability to respond with pleasure to subjective purposiveness, or to detect purposiveness of form by means of the feeling of pleasure without any subsumption of the manifold of intuitions under concepts at all. It is only in §38, he contends, that Kant asserts the principle that "If *x* is subjectively purposive for me, then it must be subjectively purposive for everyone," and this is "a reasonable-enough claim," he maintains, "given the connection between subjective purposiveness and the conditions of judgment built into the very definition of such purposiveness" (176).

For present purposes, I will not dispute Allison's division of labor between §21 and §38. To the proposed argument of §21, however, I would make two replies. First, while it is true that everyone who is capable of applying concepts to intuitions at all must have a variety of perceptual abilities to recognize the instantiation of the most elementary predicates comprised in their concepts without further rules, it does not follow from this that everyone must have the *same* set of such perceptual abilities. To take the most obvious example, both sighted and blind persons will have

a variety of perceptually based discriminatory abilities, but, of course, blind persons will not have the ability to apply color terms via unaided perception. But there may be subtler differences in the ability to apply concepts without rules even among persons with the same basic perceptual capacities: For instance, some sighted persons might have the ability to “see” the duck–rabbit figure as both a duck and a rabbit, while others with the same visual acuity might just not “get” it. Second, although perhaps Allison will reply that this bears more on the argument of §38 than on §21, I would reiterate my earlier suggestion that there is no obvious connection between the ability to make basic perceptual discriminations by “feel” and the alleged ability to judge purposiveness of form by “feeling” alone.

More important, however, are my reservations about the success of Kant’s argument in the deduction proper of §38. Allison’s suggestion that I expected the deduction itself to provide sufficient conditions for the justification of particular judgments of taste is not correct; while he correctly quotes me as saying, rather loosely, that “Kant’s own analysis of aesthetic judgment requires that his deduction come to particulars” (180),⁷ it should be clear that my general position was that the deduction is meant to justify only the conditional that *if* one has correctly ascribed a feeling of pleasure to the harmony of the faculties, *then* one may make a judgment of taste *because* the harmony of faculties can be expected to occur under the same circumstances for every ideally qualified and situated observer. As I put it at the beginning of my discussion of the deduction:

But attributing a feeling of pleasure to a source in the harmony of the higher cognitive faculties can ground a rational claim to intersubjective validity only if this harmony is itself subject to a valid imputation of intersubjectivity, or if the occurrence of this harmony in the presence of a given object may rationally be expected in anyone who does abstract from interest in its existence and confine his attention to its mere form of finality. Thus Kant must provide an argument that the harmony of the faculties occurs in different persons under the same conditions. . . .⁸

It is the task of the deduction to provide this argument, or to discharge Allison’s *quid juris*; I do not think I confused the *quid juris* with the *quid facti*.

⁷ The quotation is from 272 of the first edition of *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979); it is on 242 in the second revised edition (Guyer 1997a).

⁸ Guyer (1997a), 228.

My objections to Kant's deduction, then, were not based on the complaint that Kant fails to include the conditions for the justification of particular judgments of taste within that deduction itself, but rather that Kant failed to prove that the harmony of the faculties must in fact occur under the same circumstances even in ideally qualified and situated observers, that is, observers who have all satisfied the *quid facti*. I had two basic objections to Kant's argument: First, Kant did not prove that the general ability to subsume intuitions under concepts without further rules entails the ability to unify manifolds without concepts, or "that everyone capable of cognition must respond in the same way to a given manifold when his response is not guided by concepts at all."⁹ Second, even if we allow Kant the assumption that everyone capable of subsuming intuitions under concepts without further rules must also be capable of feeling the purposiveness of form in some manifolds without the guidance of concepts at all, we cannot reasonably assume that everyone will have this response to the same particular manifolds.¹⁰ Some might be able to feel unity in very complexly patterned and richly variegated manifolds, while others might respond this way only to less complex manifolds – perhaps that's why some people prefer the complex counterpoint of Bach to the melodic invention of Bellini, and others the converse. I do not think that Allison has addressed these objections. He simply says that "cognition itself presupposes a common sense, understood as a universally valid 'feeling' through which the conformity of universal and particular is immediately apprehended in judgment," but "if, as Kant now argues, taste . . . is likewise a feeling directed to the conformity of given representations with these same conditions, then it does seem reasonable to assume the universal validity of this feeling as well" (177). But I do not think that this suffices to prove that everyone must be able to feel the conformity of the *same* particular representations to the general conditions of cognition, which is what Kant's deduction requires. Correctly discharging the *quid facti*, that is, attributing a particular feeling of pleasure to the harmony of the faculties, will justify the assertion of a judgment of taste only if the *quid juris* has been satisfactorily answered, that is, if it has been proven that the harmony of faculties must occur in response to the same objects and their manifolds of intuition for everyone, and I do not believe that Allison has shown that Kant has proven that.

⁹ Ibid., 284.

¹⁰ Ibid., 287–8.

(iii) *Aesthetics and Morality*

Allison's account of Kant's connection between aesthetics and morality focuses on two points. First, Allison argues that Kantian morality does require us to attempt to realize certain ends, and that our experience of beauty, above all of natural beauty, gives us some sort of evidence that it will be possible for us to achieve these ends in nature, a hint that is the basis for our intellectual interest in natural beauty. Second, Allison argues that the essentially indeterminable nature of the concept of free play means that this free play expresses a rational idea of the supersensible, and thus that the experience of beauty, whether artistic or natural, really is always an expression of an idea of reason and is linked to morality by that fact.

I certainly agree with the first premise of Allison's interpretation, namely the supposition that morality imposes necessary ends upon us, and that our attempts to act morally, even if motivated purely by respect for the moral law and the ideal of duty rather than by any direct desire for those ends, would nevertheless be rendered irrational if we did not have some form of assurance that the realization of those ends is at least possible.¹¹ I likewise agree with his interpretation of Kant's claim that we can take an interest in the existence of beauty as evidence of this possibility without destroying the aesthetic character of the experience of beauty itself. My only criticism of this part of Allison's work is that it runs the risk of simplifying Kant's account of the connections between aesthetics and morality by focusing exclusively on this aesthetic intimation of the possibility of achieving the *ends* of morality. As I understand the program of the third *Critique*, it is actually meant to bridge the gap between the realm of nature and that of freedom or morality in at least *three* ways: A variety of forms of aesthetic experience are meant to give us palpable evidence of the possibility of *acting* disinterestedly, that is, the possibility of our being *motivated* by the moral law and respect for duty; aesthetic experiences are actually meant to teach us to *love* disinterestedly or even against our sensible interests, that is, to assist in the production of feelings that are actually helpful in our efforts to act in accordance with moral motivation; and then, to be sure, there are experiences of reflective judgment that are meant to assure us not only of the possibility of acting out of moral motivation but also, as Allison argues, of the possibility of realizing the ends that we would then be motivated to pursue.

¹¹ I have been arguing for precisely this in much of my recent work on Kant's moral philosophy and teleology; see for example my 2001 and 2002.

Thus, for example, I interpret Kant's thesis that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good in §59, where the analogy between beauty and the morally good is based not on any connection between the *content* of beautiful objects and the *object* or *end* of morality but on the character of the *experience* of beauty, to imply that the experience of beauty gives us a certain form of evidence of the possibility of our being *motivated* by morality or *acting* autonomously rather than heteronomously: The heart of this analogy is the claim that our experience of the freedom of the imagination in our response to beauty suggests to us the possibility of "the freedom of the will . . . conceived as the agreement of the latter with itself in accordance with universal laws of reason" (*CPJ*, §59, 5:354), or, more precisely, gives us some sensible confirmation of the more abstract or intellectual acknowledgment of this possibility that is forced upon us by our awareness of our obligation under the moral law in the so-called 'fact of reason'. Second, Kant's famous comment in the General Remark on the analytics of the beautiful and sublime that "The beautiful prepares us to love something, even nature, without interest; the sublime, to esteem it, even contrary to our (sensible) interest" (*CPJ*, §29 GR, 5:267) can be taken to mean, again, that the experience of the beautiful teaches us that it is possible for us to act disinterestedly, that is, out of disinterested motivation, while the experience of the sublime reminds us that we must often overcome sensible interests or inclinations in order to do this, but also to suggest that the experiences of the beautiful and the sublime actually prepare us to act morally by strengthening dispositions to feeling that are, as Kant says in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, "serviceable to morality in one's relations with other people."¹² To make sense of this idea requires that we think of the cultivation of feelings conducive to acting as morality requires not as an *alternative* to acting out of the motive of respect for duty but as part of the natural *means* by which we implement this motivation, but I would argue that is precisely what Kant intends.¹³

Finally, while I agree that Kant's account of our intellectual interest in natural beauty is based on the premise that we need some form of palpable assurance that we can actually realize the ends that we must form when we are successfully motivated by the moral law, I would argue that it is primarily in the Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment that Kant develops his idea that a form of the experience of reflective judgment gives us this evidence. That is, it is our experience of the internal

¹² See *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Virtue, §17, 6:443, in Kant (1996), 564.

¹³ See my 2003a.

purposiveness of organisms, not of their beauty or subjective purposiveness, that really forces upon us the thought that they must be designed, and that if they are designed, then that must be for some end – a thought that we then naturally extend both to nature as a whole and to the existence of beautiful objects, whether organic or not, within nature (see *CPJ*, §67, 5:379–80). The additional premise that only an unconditional end could really provide the point for the existence both of the system of nature as a whole as well as of natural beauty within it then leads to the further recognition that only the development of human freedom could be the final end of nature (*CPJ*, §84, 5:435 and §86, 5:443), and that in turn leads to the thought that the realization of the highest good, that is, the end that morality sets for us, must also be realizable within nature (§87, 5:450).¹⁴ I would argue that the thesis that our intellectual interest in beauty gives us a hint of nature's amenability to our moral ends is itself only a hint of this argument that is more fully developed in the second half of the third *Critique*, and also observe that even there, Kant's position seems to be that our experience of organic nature first confirms our recognition of the possibility of our *acting* freely before leading us to further confirmation of the possibility of realizing the *ends* of our free action.

I now turn to Allison's more controversial claim that the experience of beauty is virtually identical to the presentation of an idea of reason, and thus that all beauty expresses ideas and for that reason ultimately symbolizes the morally good. Allison develops this interpretation in response to my criticism that Kant's presentation of the Antinomy of Taste is redundant and his solution to it ill-founded because his account of the experience of beauty as that of the indeterminate harmony of the cognitive faculties already explains why we can rationally claim subjective universality for judgments of taste without being able to prove them from rules and without requiring recourse to the idea of a supersensible substratum of our cognitive faculties.¹⁵ Allison's theory is that the concept of an *essentially indeterminate* condition is already an idea of reason (247–8), and that any beautiful object, natural as well as artistic, thus presents an idea of reason that points us in the direction of the supersensible and therefore of morality: This is in turn why Kant's claim that the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good is appended to his solution to the antinomy of taste (257).

¹⁴ I have expounded this argument in my 2000a and 2001b.

¹⁵ See Guyer (1997a), 299–307.

I am, to be sure, simplifying Allison's complex and subtle account, but let me make three objections that I think could be defended against even a fuller presentation of his interpretation. First, I do not think that Allison's supposition that any "essentially indeterminable" concept is necessarily an idea of reason can be sustained. While I am prepared to concede Allison's claim that the harmony of the faculties should be described as "essentially indeterminable" rather than merely "indeterminate" (246), I think there is an essential difference between the harmony of the faculties and an idea of reason: The harmony of the faculties is 'essentially indeterminable' because it does not involve the subsumption of a manifold of imagination under any determinate concept of the understanding at all, even in the case of representational art, where concepts might be regarded as part of the *content* of the manifold of imagination, whereas ideas of reason are, by Kant's account, always generated *from* concepts of the understanding, although claiming for them an application beyond what could be confirmed by sensibility, given its inherent limitations. If this is correct, then the experience of the harmony of the faculties could never be more than a symbol of any idea of reason, and it would not seem to be automatic that every experience of the harmony of the faculties should necessarily be such a symbol, at least without a further framework for interpretation.

Second, while Allison's account is meant to be a defense of Kant's notorious claim that *all* "[b]eauty (whether it be beauty of nature or of art) can . . . be called the *expression* of aesthetic ideas" (*CPI*, §51, 5:320), I think that his approach simplifies Kant's conception of an aesthetic idea. His account supposes that we have an aesthetic idea whenever a manifold of imagination, because of its essential indeterminability, connotes a rational idea or, perhaps more precisely, the form of a rational idea. But Kant's theory is, I believe, more complex. As I understand Kant, an aesthetic idea is the guiding and organizing theme of a work of art that connotes a distinct idea of reason on the one hand, and is itself exemplified and presented by the more concrete material or "attributes" of the work of art on the other. Thus, for example, in a sculpture of Jupiter, the personage of the god is the aesthetic idea that connotes more abstract ideas such as omnipotence and justice on the one hand, and is realized through such more concrete attributes as his eagle on the other.¹⁶ If this is right, however, then an aesthetic idea is a distinct feature of a work of art,

¹⁶ For this interpretation, see "Kant's Conception of Fine Art," chapter 12 in Guyer (1997a) and (1997b), 85–98.

identical neither to the idea of reason that it suggests to us – which is itself a particular idea of reason, not the general idea of an essentially indeterminable idea that the experience of beauty would express on Allison's account – nor to the harmony of the faculties that the work may induce in us. The claim that the harmony of the faculties itself suggests by its very form an idea of practical reason is, in my view, a separate and further claim, which Kant does not suggest until he asserts the analogy between the beautiful and the morally good in §59; it is not already entailed by or necessary for the resolution of the antinomy of taste.

This leads to my third concern, which I might put by saying that even if we accept the claim that the concept of the harmony of the faculties is itself an idea of reason, it still would not follow that it is *ipso facto* a morally significant idea of reason. All ideas of reason are not, of course, the same; for example, the idea of a determinate cosmos is an idea of reason, but not immediately of any moral significance. Some more complex argument would be needed to identify the harmony of the faculties with a morally significant idea of reason. To be fair, Allison does actually argue that the harmony of the faculties is a morally significant idea of reason not just because of its essential indeterminability, but because it is the idea of the form of purposiveness (251), and moral ideas are obviously connected to purposiveness as well. But here I would counter that the experience of the harmony of the faculties is in the first instance an experience of the form of *cognitive* purposiveness and not directly an experience of even the form of *practical* purposiveness. If the experience of beauty is to retain its disinterestedness, surely its connection to practical purposiveness can be only analogical, as Kant indeed maintains in §59.

So I conclude that Allison's attempt to rescue Kant's antinomy of taste is a failure. But I hardly conclude that Allison's book is a failure. It is a rich and provocative work that illuminates many aspects of Kant's third *Critique*, a book that is not merely about common sense but is also a frustrating mixture of common sense and obscurity that has proven surprisingly resistant to conclusive interpretation. Allison ably defends many of Kant's central theses and arguments, and even where he does not, he presents cogent interpretations that will deservedly receive close attention in the years to come.

RESPONSE TO PAUL GUYER BY HENRY E. ALLISON

Paul Guyer has graciously acknowledged that we have wide areas of agreement, indeed, even more than I had thought to be the case. Nevertheless,

as his critical comments make clear, there remains considerable disagreement. Accordingly, I shall here focus on the disagreements that he emphasizes, most of which stem, I think, from our widely different attitudes toward the systematic nature of Kant's enterprise in the third *Critique*.

The initial set of objections concern issues involving the complex relationship between reflective judgment in general, the principle of purposiveness, and aesthetic judgment. First, Guyer states that he does not think that I have "convincingly shown that we actually employ the principle of purposiveness . . . in the process of making judgments of taste" (Guyer, this volume). This is quite true, since I endeavored to show no such thing. On the contrary, I agreed with Guyer that Kant's passing suggestions that the principle of logical or formal purposiveness is also the principle licensing judgments of taste are deeply misleading and do not represent his considered view.¹⁷ Nevertheless, developing a suggestion of Klaus Düsing, I also distinguished between a general principle (or conception) of purposiveness and the specific principle of logical or formal purposiveness that is operative in the investigation of nature. And I further indicated that what they have in common is their "heautonomy," that is, their grounding in and application to the power of judgment.¹⁸

Guyer's second objection concerns my alleged suggestion "that feeling can be equated with the capacity to judge" (Guyer, this exchange). Although I hope that I didn't suggest *that*, I did state that feeling for Kant plays an essential judgmental role. Indeed, this is the only way in which I can understand the Kantian conception of an 'aesthetic power of judgment.' Thus, in the very first section of the third *Critique*, Kant states explicitly that the feeling of pleasure or displeasure "grounds an entirely special faculty for discriminating and judging" (5:204). In short, in agreement with other eighteenth-century theorists of taste, Kant is committed to the view that in a judgment of taste one judges *through one's feeling*. By contrast, on Guyer's reading, the judgment is about the causal ancestry of one's feeling. But my problem with this is understanding how such a judgment could be *aesthetic*, except in the Pickwickian sense that might also apply to my judgment about the cause of my hangover. Certainly, it does not require anything like a distinct power of judgment.

Guyer seems to have been led to his causal reading by the rejection of the viability of something like the alternative I propose – let us call it the 'intentional reading.' The problem, as he sees it, lies in its apparent

¹⁷ Allison (2001), 59–62.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 63–4.

incompatibility with Kant's insistence on the noncognitive nature of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Since this feeling cannot be referred to an object in a judgment, how can it function as a mode of judging in anything like the manner I suggest?

Problematic as it may seem, however, the fact remains that Kant does speak frequently of this feeling as one *through which* the mental state of free harmony is represented.¹⁹ Moreover, to my mind, these texts, taken together with the previously noted characterization of the power of aesthetic judgment, make the case for the intentional reading compelling.

Against this, Guyer insists that to attribute intentionality to a feeling implies that the feeling must have "an internal content or structure that determines its reference" (Guyer, this exchange), and he further claims not to be able to find this in the pleasure of taste. Indeed, on his view, it appears that all feelings for Kant are basically "raw feels," which can differ from one another in intensity and cause, but not in any phenomenologically discernible qualitative features. Although I cannot here enter into a debate about the nature of intentionality, I believe it plausible to understand intentionality as the directedness or aboutness characteristic of consciousness. And since such consciousness need not amount to cognition ('recognition in a concept' in Kant's terminology), there is room within a Kantian framework for viewing feeling as a mode of consciousness, and, therefore, as having intentionality.

I likewise do not think it correct to deny that the pleasure of taste (or any pleasure for Kant) has an "internal content or structure that determines its referent." First, it has a distinct *quality*, namely, disinterestedness, that characterizes the kind of liking it involves, one that Kant describes, albeit briefly, in terms of a lingering (5:222). Second, if a feeling with a richer phenomenology is required, one need look no further than Kant's account of the sublime. Granted, the latter is not the feeling for the beautiful, but it is a feeling with a complex internal structure. Thus, it (along with moral feeling) appears to be an important counterexample to what Guyer takes to be the Kantian conception of feeling.

I believe that the true test of our respective accounts, however, is which yields the more adequate rendering of Kant's conception of a judgment of taste. Guyer takes the great virtue of his interpretation to be its ability to explain why the judgment of taste is always uncertain, something that I also emphasize but allegedly fail to elucidate. On his view, he thinks that this is readily explained by the fact that we have to judge that an object

¹⁹ See, for example, *FI* 20:223, 228, 230, *KU* 5:189, 190, 219, 220, and 222.

is beautiful “indirectly and by exclusion, that is, by excluding sensory or moral interests as alternative causes” (Guyer, this exchange), a process that can never yield certainty. He further questions whether this is possible on my view, since I hold that “feelings of pleasure or displeasure are sufficient conditions for making aesthetic judgments” (ibid.).

Guyer is correct that on my reading these feelings (as likings or dislikings) are sufficient conditions for making aesthetic judgments or, more precisely, judgments of taste. But he neglects to note the emphasis I place on the distinction between a judgment of taste *simpliciter* and a *pure* judgment of taste. Thus, I have argued that we can be certain about having made a judgment of taste but not about having made a pure one. And I develop this point by drawing the analogy with Kant’s notorious claim in his moral theory that we can never be certain of having acted from duty alone.²⁰ No matter how sincere and conscientious one believes oneself to have been in the performance of duty, it always remains possible that the “dear self” lies behind the action. In other words, just as we can never be certain of the purity of our motive, so, too, we cannot be certain about the “purity” of our liking.

More importantly, on my view, this uncertainty cannot be understood in the manner Guyer suggests. This becomes clear by considering his example of the mushroom cloud. As he describes the situation, the problem is to determine which of two possible causes is responsible for the phenomenon, and ruling out one on the basis of evidence establishes the likelihood of the other. Similarly, Guyer reasons that, in the case of the feeling for the beautiful, by ruling out possible interests as its cause, we may judge (albeit not infallibly) that it was produced by the harmony of the faculties.

I find this analogy revealing, since it points to a fundamental difference in our readings of Kant. For I do not think it appropriate (particularly from a Kantian perspective) to view interests as *causes*. Rather, they have the status of reasons: either reasons to act or reasons to like (or dislike).²¹ As I see it, this follows from the very nature of an interest (whether sensuous or moral) as a product of practical reason.²² But if this is so, then to exclude an interest as the ground of a liking is to exclude a certain kind of reason for it (e.g., that one finds the object agreeable or morally uplifting) rather than certain possible causes. Thus, if, as Guyer suggests,

²⁰ Allison (2001), 178.

²¹ At *KU* 5:221 Kant refers to interests as determining grounds of judgment.

²² See *Gr* 4:414n and 460n; *KprV* 5:79.

determining whether a specific liking is really for the beautiful is a matter of interpretation, then I think it is more like the interpretation of an action in terms of an underlying intent than of an effect as the “sign” of its underlying cause.

Since I believe that our differences regarding the deduction are largely a consequence of those just discussed, I shall be somewhat more succinct in my reply to Guyer’s second set of objections. To begin with, he seems to have misunderstood the nature of my charge that he conflates the *quid facti* with the *quid juris*. My quarrel with Guyer on this matter is not with his inclusion of justificatory criteria within the Analytic of the Beautiful (though I divide up the four moments in a quite different way than he does). The problem, as I see it, concerns rather his view of the goal of the deduction, which he claims at one point is to provide “an argument sufficient to justify the imputation of specific feelings to others on specific occasions.”²³ In the present context, he takes this to require proving that “the harmony of the faculties occurs in different persons under the same conditions” (Guyer, this exchange). In either case, however, as a causal claim about the conditions under which a certain mental state occurs, it certainly concerns a matter of fact. And, as such, it might warrant an *expectation* of agreement (or, under ideal conditions, a prediction); but, as has often been noted, this is quite different from licensing a *demand* that others acknowledge the appropriateness of one’s aesthetic response.²⁴

Accordingly, Guyer is incorrect, or at least somewhat misleading, in claiming that I fail to answer his objections to the deduction. For my view is that these objections result from a misreading of Kant’s project. Nevertheless, I think that Guyer is being perfectly consistent in viewing the deduction in the way he does, since it is the logical consequence of his causal interpretation of the judgment of taste. Thus, I am willing to concede that if Guyer is right about that, then he is also correct in his diagnosis of where the deduction fails. But since I do not think that he is correct about the former, I have largely ignored his specific criticisms of the latter. Instead, I have endeavored to develop a different account of the concern and structure of the deduction.

²³ Guyer (1979), 272.

²⁴ Interestingly, at one point Guyer himself distinguishes sharply between the notions of expectation and demand, but connects the former with what he takes to be the epistemological reading of the deduction and the latter with an interpretation (such as Crawford’s) that sees the deduction of taste as turning on its connection with morality (op. cit., p. 261). Thus, he apparently fails to recognize any role for an ought (such as the familiar ought of good reasons) in the analysis of taste independently of morality.

Fortunately, Kant himself is of considerable help in this regard, since he is quite explicit about how he understands the task. On my reading, the key passage occurs in §34, where Kant tells us that the project is to “develop [*entwickeln*] and justify the subjective principle of taste as an *a priori* principle of the power of judgment” (5:286). In other words, the deduction consists of two steps: one in which the subjective principle governing taste is developed or specified, and the other in which this principle is justified. The former occurs in §35, where Kant identifies the principle of taste with “the subjective principle of the power of judgment in general” (5:286), and the latter in §38, which Kant entitles “Deduction of Judgments of Taste” (5:289).

The argument of §35 is notoriously obscure, even by Kantian standards; for it is here that Kant speaks darkly of “schematizing without a concept” and of subsuming, not intuitions under concepts, but the *faculty* of intuitions (here identified with the imagination) under the *faculty* of concepts (5:287). Nevertheless, at the risk of gross oversimplification, I take Kant’s basic point to be that it is the power of judgment itself that serves as the norm governing judgments of taste, which means that in such a judgment the representation of an object is “subsumed” under the conditions required by judgment to move from intuition to concept. Thus, what is sensed in the judgment of taste is the conformity (or lack thereof) of this representation with the norm (agreement of the imagination and understanding).²⁵

If this is correct, then the task of §38, or the deduction proper, is simply to show that the *principle* of judging aesthetically on the basis of conformity to the subjective conditions of judgment is valid for everyone. But this really requires little more than the reminder that these conditions, as conditions of cognition, can be presupposed in all human beings. That is why, as Kant notes in a remark attached to the section, the deduction is so easy (5:290). For what it attempts to ground is simply the normative principle that aesthetic judgments made in accordance with these conditions of judgment, that is, pure judgments of taste, make a warranted demand for agreement.²⁶

²⁵ See *FI* 20:220; 23.

²⁶ I believe that this is supported by Kant’s claim that “it is not the pleasure but the *universal validity of this pleasure* perceived in the mind as connected with the mere judging of an object that is represented in a judgment of taste as a universal rule in the judgment of taste, valid for everyone” (5:289). For Guyer’s quite different reading of this passage, see Guyer (1997), 259. I discuss Guyer’s reading in Allison (2001), 174.

Otherwise expressed, Kant is claiming that the felt free conformity of the representation of an object to the subjective conditions of cognition constitutes a compelling, universally valid “reason” to like an object apart from any interest. And what makes this reason compelling is the necessity of assuming (on pain of epistemological skepticism) that the subjective conditions of cognition hold for the entire universe of cognizers. Accordingly, what you must agree with is not my first-order judgment that *x* is beautiful (or nonbeautiful), though I would naturally welcome such agreement. It is rather the normative principle that *if* my liking for an object is, in fact, based on these grounds, you *ought* to like it also, and that your failure to do so must be ascribed to a deficiency of taste. But, of course, the problem is that since one can never be sure about the true grounds of one’s liking, one is never in a position actually to demand the agreement of others to a particular judgment.

Admittedly, this makes the conclusion of the deduction relatively weak, certainly weaker than Guyer and others have taken it to be. Nevertheless, the deduction, on my reading, is far from trivial. For, if successful, it establishes that there is normativity in the domain of taste and that it is based on a principle unique to judgment. Consequently, judgments of taste are reducible neither to judgments of the agreeable, which are altogether lacking in normativity, nor to judgments of perfection, whose normativity is taken directly from cognition. Moreover, this is tantamount to establishing the autonomy (or, better, heautonomy) of taste, which both Guyer and I agree is a condition of its moral significance.

Since I cannot here attempt to provide anything like an adequate response to Guyer’s critique of my account of the connections between aesthetics and morality, I shall simply note a couple of places where I believe he misreads my views and attempt to summarize these views in a way that highlights what I take to be the main differences between us on these complex topics. To begin with, Guyer suggests that I run “the risk of simplifying Kant’s account of the connections between aesthetics and morality by focusing exclusively on the aesthetic intimation of the possibility of achieving the *ends* of morality” (Guyer, this exchange). But though it is certainly true that I focus on this problem, particularly in connection with natural beauty, I hardly think it fair to say that I do so *exclusively*. On the contrary, I also insist that the experience of beauty has an important propaedeutic function, helping us to break with our sensuous interests and thereby providing a kind of bridge to morality.²⁷

²⁷ See Allison (2001), 264–6.

Up to this point, then, I do not think that there is a major disagreement between us. Deep differences do emerge, however, when we turn to the pivotal issues of how beauty supposedly symbolizes morality, whether this applies to both natural and artistic beauty, and, most importantly, the linkage between Kant's accounts of symbolization and aesthetic ideas and the resolution of the antinomy of taste in §57. In particular, Guyer dismisses Kant's move from the need for some (unspecified) indeterminable concept to the concept of the supersensible as an unwarranted venture into metaphysics, which is of no relevance to the account of taste. Instead, he insists that all that is required to resolve the antinomy is the appeal to the epistemological-psychological concept of the harmony of the faculties.²⁸ By contrast, my project is once again to take the systematic dimension of Kant's account seriously and to provide a reading that makes some sense out of its admittedly mysterious features.

In doing so, however, I do not, as Guyer suggests, attempt to elevate the harmony of the faculties itself into an idea of reason. I argue instead that the indeterminable concept required to resolve the antinomy is that of the beautiful. Moreover, contra Guyer, I believe that Kant identifies indeterminable concepts with ideas of reason.²⁹

It follows from this that the concept of the beautiful is such an idea. And I defend this claim by focusing on the explication of the beautiful at the end of the third moment: "*Beauty* is the form of purposiveness of an object, insofar as it is perceived in it without *representation of an end*" (5:236). In brief, my claim is that the concept of the form of purposiveness is an indeterminable concept and that purposiveness, though viewed in the third *Critique* in connection with judgment, is with regard to its origin, an idea of reason.³⁰ Thus, in this respect I privilege the third moment, whereas Guyer privileges the second; but I believe that my approach is justified on the grounds that it is in the third moment that Kant focuses on the aesthetic object. It also leads naturally to the talk of the supersensible, which is the central feature of Kant's resolution of the antinomy.

It is with this connection between taste and the supersensible in mind that I attempt to explore how *all* beauty might be thought to symbolize

²⁸ See Guyer (1997a), 340.

²⁹ The key text here is *KU* 5:342, where Kant defines such an idea as an "*indemonstrable* concept of reason." To say that it is indemonstrable is to say that it is indeterminable. And I take Kant's point to be that ideas of reason, and only such ideas, have this property. This is what distinguishes them from aesthetic ideas, on the one hand, and from concepts of the understanding, on the other.

³⁰ Allison (2001), 249–50.

the morally good. The starting point of my analysis is a formalistic understanding of the symbolization relation, which I explicate in terms of a reflective isomorphism. Simply put, beauty symbolizes the morally good because reflection on the former may be viewed as a sensuously directed analogue of reflection on the latter.³¹ I believe that this accords with Kant's well-known illustrations of symbolization in terms of the constitutional monarchy–living organism and the absolute monarchy–machine analogies, where the analogies concern not the objects but our manner of reflecting upon them (5:352). It also applies to both artistic and natural beauty, since reflection on both assumes the same form.³²

I further argue, however, that there is a problem in moving from these conceptually based examples of symbolization to one in which sensible concepts are not involved (as is the case with the beautiful). Accordingly, it is at this point that I appeal to aesthetic ideas and their relation to ideas of reason. My claim is that since aesthetic ideas, though they are themselves products of the imagination, nonetheless gesture toward the supersensible, they provide the vehicle for understanding how something sensible (a beautiful object of nature or art) could symbolize something supersensible (the morally good). Moreover, since Kant maintains that all beauty (natural as well as artistic) expresses aesthetic ideas (5:320), I contend that this helps to explain how *all* beauty symbolizes the morally good, which is just what Kant explicitly claims in §59.

Guyer objects to this on two grounds. First, he accuses me of oversimplifying Kant's conception of an aesthetic idea, since I suppose that "we have an aesthetic idea whenever a manifold of imagination, because of its essential indeterminability, connotes . . . the form of a rational idea" (Guyer, this exchange). Although I would not put it in quite these terms, I do think that we have aesthetic ideas when something imaginatively apprehended in mere reflection points to something supersensible. But I fail to see why this involves an oversimplification. Of course, Kant's initial discussion of such ideas is in connection with fine art and the activity of genius; but he further states that natural beauty expresses such ideas as well. And I do not see how this can be understood in other than the functionalist terms that I use, which, incidentally, also explains the role of

³¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

³² Guyer apparently denies this, suggesting at one point that it applies only to natural beauty. And he further suggests that what the latter symbolizes is our autonomy, which I do not believe can be equated with the morally good. See Guyer (1996), 268.

such ideas in symbolizing ideas of reason. If Guyer has any better account of this difficult matter, I would be interested in seeing it.

Guyer's final objection appears to concern my move from the expression of aesthetic ideas to the symbolization of morality.³³ This points to a real problem in Kant, since aesthetic ideas are said to express ideas of reason and not all of the latter are moral ideas, much less ideas of the morally good. But far from being unaware of the problem, I attempted to address it by emphasizing the formal nature of the symbolic relation. On my view, this makes it possible to conceive of the reflection on expressions of aesthetic ideas as symbolizing the morally good, even though these ideas themselves do not express the latter.³⁴ Although this requires distinguishing between what an aesthetic idea expresses and what it symbolizes, on my understanding of symbolization this is not problematic. Moreover, it does not preclude some beautiful objects from also being connected with morality in a more substantive sense. This occurs when, in addition to occasioning a form of reflection isomorphic with reflection on the morally good, it also evokes specific moral ideas.

Although Guyer claims that this account fails, it is not clear to me from his criticisms that he has understood it correctly. Of course, the fault may be my own for failing to express myself with sufficient clarity. And if this is, in fact, the case, I hope that these remarks, sketchy as they undoubtedly are, help to clarify my position and highlight the differences between our views.

³³ Actually, he expresses his objection by saying that "even if we accept the claim that the concept of the harmony of the faculties is itself an idea of reason, it still would not follow that it is *ipso facto* a morally significant idea of reason" (26). The problem with that, however, is that I do not affirm the antecedent.

³⁴ Allison (2001), 261–3.

Intensive Magnitudes and the Normativity of Taste

Melissa Zinkin

What distinguishes a judgment of taste from a cognitive judgment? According to Kant, both forms of judgment are normative and both rely upon the transcendental faculties of imagination and understanding for their normativity. Yet one refers to a subjective feeling of pleasure, while the other refers to an object. In Kant's account, it is the role of the imagination that differs in aesthetic judgments and cognitive judgments. In cognition, the imagination is subject to the rules of the understanding with which its relation is "objective" (XX:223).¹ In a judgment of taste, the imagination's relation to the understanding is "subjective" (XX:223) because the imagination is not referred to a concept of the understanding, but to the subject and his or her feeling of pleasure or displeasure (V:204). It is also a relation of "free lawfulness" (V:240).

But why is the imagination subject to the understanding in one instance and not in the other? Many commentators have attempted to explain the freedom of the imagination from concepts in judgments of taste by finding places in Kant's theoretical philosophy that indicate that there could be a form of synthesis without a concept.² They point to Kant's discussion of the "threefold synthesis" in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where it is only by the last of these syntheses, "the synthesis of recognition in the concept," that the manifold is unified by a concept. This allows for the possibility that there can be a synthesis of the

¹ All references to Kant's works are given by volume and page number of the *Akademie* edition (see References), except for citations to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which utilize the customary format of "A" and/or "B" to refer to the first and/or second edition.

² See, for example, Guyer (1997a), 75–6, and Zammito (1992), 65.

imagination prior to that which is achieved by concepts and that judgments of taste represent this arrested stage of a threefold process toward cognition. Or commentators refer to the “judgments of perception” in the *Prolegomena*, which “require no pure concept of the understanding, but only the logical connection of perception in the thinking subject” (IV:298).³ Still, merely to show that it is possible for there to be a form of synthesis that is not determined by concepts is not to give a reason for why such a synthesis occurs. Any account of Kant’s argument for a principle of judgments of taste must be able to provide a reason why, in these judgments, the imagination is not restricted by a concept, in order to also be able to explain why the freedom of the imagination is an essential component of aesthetic judgments.

In what follows, I argue that the imagination is not restricted to a particular rule of cognition in judgments of taste because the form of intuition by which it apprehends the manifold is different. In cognitive judgments, the determination of the manifold by a concept requires that this manifold be apprehended in an extensive form of intuition. However, in judgments of taste, it is because the manifold is intuited in an intensive form of intuition that it cannot be subsumed under any determinate concept. Furthermore, I conclude, the *sensus communis*, which, according to Kant, is what makes possible normative judgments of taste, is none other than the a priori form of sense that makes possible the intuition of intensive magnitudes constructed by the imagination. By understanding judgments of taste as involving what is apprehended in an intensive form of intuition, and by understanding the *sensus communis* as an a priori form of sensibility, I believe it is possible to account for three of the most important (and problematic) distinctive features of judgments of taste: (1) They are not determined by a concept. (2) They give rise to a distinctive kind of pleasure, the pleasure we take in a beautiful object. (3) They make a subjective claim to universal validity.

My argument proceeds as follows: Section 1 explains the distinction between intensive and extensive magnitudes in Kant. Section 2 argues that, for Kant, concepts can only be applied to what is apprehended in an extensive form of time. Section 3 focuses on the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and shows that there, the imagination “in its freedom” is the imagination that apprehends the manifold intensively and is thus “free” from determination by concepts. Section 4 argues that the *sensus communis* is the a priori form of intensive magnitudes and is therefore

³ See Uehling (1971), 57.

the basis for the claim of a subjective form of universal agreement that is distinctive of judgments of taste.

1. INTENSIVE AND EXTENSIVE MAGNITUDES

In this section, after briefly discussing extensive magnitudes, I will explain Kant's view of intensive magnitudes. My account will focus primarily on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, since my aim is ultimately to compare the presentation of intensive magnitudes in the first *Critique* with that in the third. For Kant, an intensive magnitude (*intensive Größe*) is a quality. Quantitative distinctions among qualities that are the same, such as distinctions between different shades of the same color blue, are measured in terms of degrees of intensity.⁴ This is in contrast to an extensive magnitude, which is measured in terms of the addition of homogeneous units. Because intensive magnitudes are qualities, Kant refers to them primarily in his discussion of the categories of quality, their schematization, and the principle of the Anticipations of Perception. Although his discussion of intensive magnitudes in the *Critique of Pure Reason* implies that Kant assumes that they have an a priori ground, I argue that in this work he does not provide an a priori form that would make intensive magnitudes possible.

1.1. Extensive Magnitudes

An extensive magnitude is one "in which the representation of the parts makes possible the representation of the whole (and therefore necessarily precedes the latter)" (A162). In the Transcendental Aesthetic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant describes both space and time as extensive magnitudes and thus as having the essential characteristics of extensivity: homogeneity and additivity. Homogeneity is the property of being of uniform quality throughout, and additivity is the property by which something can be measured in terms of the addition of units that are its parts. The length of something, for example, is the sum of the length of its parts. By contrast, an intensive magnitude such as density is not the sum of the densities of its parts.⁵

Because Kant views space and time as extensive, he argues that the pure schema of magnitude, or quantity, is number. The schema of magnitude

⁴ Maier (1930), 35.

⁵ Brittan (1986), 77.

is that by which the categories of quantity can be applied to the intuition of time and hence to objects of experience. Since time and space are extensive, that is, homogeneous and additive, their quantity, and, indeed, the quantity of anything that is spatial or temporal, thus ends up being measured in terms of numerical units. Kant writes:

The pure image of all magnitudes (*quantorum*) for outer sense is space; for all the objects of the senses in general, it is time. The pure *schema of magnitude* (*quantitas*), however, as a concept of the understanding, is *number* that is a representation that summarizes (*zusammenfaßt*) the successive addition of one (homogeneous) unit to another. This number is nothing other than the unity of the synthesis of the manifold of a homogeneous intuition in general, because I generate time itself in the apprehension of the intuition. (A142–3/B182)

Discursive or conceptual thought applied to the pure image of magnitude (time or space) thus yields a metric in which one unit thought after a preceding homogeneous unit will yield two units, and so on. As Charles Parsons points out, unlike other views of addition in which “we have a timeless relation, for example, that one set is the union of two others . . . and in reference to which any talk of successive addition is on the face of it entirely metaphorical,” in Kant’s view, addition has to be successive, because it is literally the placing of one unit after another in thought.⁶ It is this succession that creates the order of units that we call numbers. Consequently, number is the measure of extensive magnitudes.

1.2. Intensive Magnitudes

In contrast to extensive magnitudes, which are measured by homogeneous unitary parts that succeed one another, intensive magnitudes are measured by the degrees contained *within* them. Kant writes of intensive magnitudes, “I call that magnitude (*Größe*) which can only be apprehended as a unity (*Einheit*), and in which amount (*Vielheit*) can only be represented through approximation to negation = 0, intensive magnitude” (A168/B210). Kant’s description of intensive magnitudes as what can “only be apprehended as a unity” contrasts them to extensive magnitudes, “in which the representation of the parts makes possible the representation of the whole (and therefore necessarily precedes the latter)” (A162). The difference between intensive and extensive magnitudes thus involves how each of these forms of unity relates to their “quantity” (*Vielheit*), the multiplicity of which they are unities. Unities of extensive

⁶ Parsons (1982), 31.

magnitude are the sums of their parts. For example, one yard is made up of thirty-six inches. Intensive magnitudes, on the other hand, are measured as wholes *from which* “parts” (or degrees) can be derived, or that can gradually be diminished to zero. In the *Metaphysik Vigilantus* (1794–5), Kant thus describes an intensive magnitude as one

whereby the parts are not cognized previously in order to determine the magnitude, rather (it) must be cognized as a unity, and the parts drawn from the unity. Thus e.g., a line, which must be composed, differs from an extinguishing light: with the latter there is only a unity of sensation, but in each following state a different degree of this. (XXIV:999)

Intensive magnitudes can thus be called the ‘ground’ from which a range of values can be derived.⁷ By contrast, an extensive magnitude is not the ‘ground’ of the quantities it posits, but merely a collection of units.⁸ Intensive magnitudes are thus those things whose standard of measurement pertains to them alone. Extensive magnitudes, on the other hand, such as “space [or] the size of an army,”⁹ are all measured by the same system of counting.

Kant calls the different forms of unity that result from the synthesis of extensive and intensive magnitudes ‘aggregates’ and ‘coalitions’, respectively (B201n). In the Anticipations of Perception, he uses the example of money to illustrate this difference between extensive and intensive magnitudes, which he says is also the difference between intuition and mere perception or sensation. This example is noteworthy, since, as the quality of a thing, intensive magnitudes are also values. Kant writes:

If I call thirteen dollars a quantum of money, I do so correctly insofar as I mean an amount of a mark of fine silver, which is to be sure a continuous magnitude, in which no part is the smallest but each part could constitute a coin that would always contain material for smaller ones. But if by the term “thirteen round

⁷ See Kant’s *Metaphysics Herder* (1762–4):

A quantum is considered either intensively – that which has a quantity insofar as it is a ground – or extensively – that which has a quantity, but not insofar as it is a ground, for example space, the size of an army. Quantity is considered either intensively, insofar as something posits something else a given number of times; or extensively, insofar as in something, something else is posited a given number of times. (XXVIII:22)

⁸ My view of intensive magnitudes as the basis for the quantities that can be derived from them differs somewhat from the view of Daniel Warren (2001). Warren argues that by describing an intensive magnitude as a “ground,” Kant means the causal ground of a consequence (30). Unlike Warren, I interpret the “ground-consequence” description of intensive magnitudes teleologically rather than mechanistically.

⁹ XXVIII:22.

dollars" I mean so many coins (whatever their amount of silver might be), then it would not be suitable to call this a quantum of dollars, but it must instead be called an aggregate, i.e. a number of coins. (A170/B212)

Here a continuous magnitude, which is the unity of a coalition, is the value of the silver. No matter how many units thirteen dollars can be broken up into, it will still have the same value. Such a continuous magnitude cannot be measured additively by counting its units. When thirteen dollars are understood as "thirteen round dollars," Kant even seems to suggest that they have no value at all. They are just so many physical objects, a number of coins: "so many coins (whatever their amount of silver might be)." A continuous magnitude is thus the measure of the *value* of an indivisible whole. If there is no complete whole, then there is nothing to which an intensive measure can be attributed. This is the meaning of Kant's statement that "if the synthesis of the manifold of appearance is interrupted, then it is the aggregate of many appearances (and not really appearance as quantum)" (A170/B212). If a degree is without reference to an original unity, it loses its value. For example, only once something, such a lump of silver, is designated as having a value of thirteen dollars can the value of the parts into which it is divided be determined. If the lump has no designated worth, then the worth of its parts, as parts, cannot be determined. The quality, or value, of a thing is thus a measure that is made with regard to a standard of the completeness or fullness of the kind of value of the thing that is measured.

Kant's description in the Anticipations of Perception of intensive magnitudes as "flowing" is also related to the fact that they are unities from which "parts (or values) are drawn." He writes,

[B]etween any reality and negation there is a continuous nexus of possible realities, and of possible smaller perceptions. Every color, e.g. red, has a degree, which however small it may be is never the smallest, and it is the same with warmth, with the moment of gravity, etc. The property of magnitudes on account of which no part of them is the smallest (no part is simple) is called their continuity... magnitudes of this sort can be called flowing, since the synthesis (of the productive imagination) in their generation is a progress in time, the continuity of which is customarily designated by the expression "flowing" ("elapsing") (*fließende*)." (A169–70/B211–12)

"Flowing magnitudes" are those that are generated by the motion of a point. Here Kant is probably referring to Newton.¹⁰ What Newton refers to as a 'flowing magnitude' or a 'fluent' is a quantity generated by a

¹⁰ Friedman (1992), 74.

continual motion.¹¹ The reason intensive magnitudes are discussed here with regard to flowing magnitudes is because they are the quantities, or functions, *from which* continuous lines, and so on, are generated and are what determine the measure such a flowing magnitude will have.

To summarize the discussion so far, we can say that an intensive magnitude is a quality or value and that as a form of unity it determines the values of what flows or is drawn from it. Yet, it still remains unclear what exactly the basis of its “measure” is. If Kant is to claim that intensive magnitudes and the degrees by which they are measured can be known a priori, he must provide a transcendental condition for this knowledge. Unlike Leibniz, he cannot just dogmatically claim that intensive magnitudes exist.

In contrast to extensive magnitudes, whose standard of measurement is whole numbers that represent the succession of units in time, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant describes the standard of measurement for intensive magnitudes as that which represents the transition from the presence to the absence of a sensation in time. Kant writes:

[T]here is a relation and connection between, or rather a transition from reality to negation, that makes every reality representable as a quantum, and the schema of a reality as the quantity of something insofar as it fills time, is just this continuous and uniform generation of that quantity in time as one descends in time from the sensation that has a certain degree to its disappearance or gradually ascends from negation to its magnitude. (A143/B182–3)

A schema, it will be recalled, is the expression in time of one of the pure concepts of thought. It is a determination of time. This passage should therefore not be read as saying that the schema of reality is the degree to which a *sensation* can fill time. That would make the schema a determination of sensations and would make the application of the category of reality to time something based on a subjective feeling. Instead, the schema of reality should be regarded as the determination of time itself as what can be filled in degrees by sensation, and thus as what makes possible the metric of intensive magnitudes. In this way, the standard for measuring the degrees of intensity of a sensation is derived from a moment of time considered not as a unit that can be followed by other

¹¹ Newton writes in the “Quadrature of Curves,” “I don’t here consider mathematical quantities as composed of parts extremely small, but as generated by a continual motion. Lines are described, and by describing are generated, not by any apposition of parts but by a continual motion of points, surfaces are generated by the motion of lines . . . and so in the rest” (1967, 141). See also Friedman’s discussion of this passage in Friedman (1992), 74ff.

moments, but as something that can be filled up to a greater or lesser degree. Still, Kant's account leaves it unclear how we are to measure this "greater or lesser," this "quantity of something" with regard to how it fills up a moment of time.

Paul Guyer's discussion of Kant's attempt in the *Anticipations of Perception* to assimilate "his theory of intensive magnitude into the theory of time determination" makes clear how problematic intensive magnitudes are for Kant.¹² In order for Kant to be able to say that the instant in which a sensation occurs can also be a measure of the increase or decrease in intensity of the sensation, individual sensations of a given quality need to be thought of as "members of a potential series of instances of the same kind of sensation, which are undergoing an increase or decrease of intensity over time."¹³ But, Guyer contends, the premise of Kant's argument, which is that "apprehension, merely by means of sensation fills only an instant" (A167/B209), conflicts with the idea that sensations can come in a continuous variation of intensity. This is because what is apprehended in an instant does not necessarily bring with it any indication of another temporal determination. A shade of blue could indicate a stage in a series of degrees of blue or it could not. And if it is a stage of a *series* of degrees, then it is being measured in an extensive form of time. Kant has given no a priori basis from which one can claim that sensations vary in intensity and no way to measure this intensity. What he needs is some form of intuition that would be the basis of a scale that could represent the amount of time indicated by a particular degree of a sensation that is apprehended in an instant.

One can picture this scale as being vertical to the horizontal time line, so that a sensation would have two temporal coordinates: one being the point of extensive time at which the sensation occurs; the other, the second order of time it *would have* taken the sensation to ascend from negation to its magnitude. Such an order would represent the degrees of sensation "anticipated" as possible on the basis of the present sensation. Since such a form of time is not argued for in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Guyer is right that the *Anticipations of Perception* results in confusion. Indeed, as I will argue in the [next section](#), this is due to the fact that the categories, such as that of "reality," can only be applied to what is intuited in a complete instant of homogeneous time. Consequently, a priori judgments of intensive magnitudes are impossible within the context of

¹² Guyer (1987), 203.

¹³ *Ibid.*

the *Critique of Pure Reason*. However, it is precisely such a form of time in which intensity can be measured that is presented in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

2. TIME, CONCEPTS, AND THE IMAGINATION IN THE FIRST *CRITIQUE*

Before proceeding to my analysis of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, I will show that for Kant, concepts can only be applied to representations that have been apprehended and reproduced in an extensive form of time. In the following section, I will then show that what is apprehended in an *intensive* form of time – and what consequently cannot be thought by means of a concept – is what forms the basis of a judgment of taste.

According to Kant, the role of concepts in cognition is to produce a synthesis of a manifold of representations according to a rule. Implicit in his discussion of the synthesis produced according to a concept is the idea that what is synthesized is discrete representations each contained in one moment of time. In the Subjective Deduction of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant describes the “synthesis of recognition in the concept” as follows:

If, in counting, I forget that the units that now hover before my senses were successively added together by me, then I would not cognize the generation of the multitude through this successive addition of one to the other, and consequently I would not cognize the number; for this concept consists solely in the consciousness of this unity of the synthesis. The word “concept” itself could already lead us to this remark. For it is this one consciousness that unifies the manifold that has been successively intuited, and then also reproduced, into one representation. (A103)

The synthesis of recognition in the concept serves to unify a manifold in one consciousness according to a rule. This act of synthesis orders our representations according to a concept that makes it possible for our cognition to be of an object and not be a mere subjective association of perceptions. A concept is required for such a unified representation, since the manifold that is to be unified consists of past representations contained in the discrete moments of their successive apprehension. These can be unified only on the condition that there is a transcendental form of apperception, a “numerical unity” of consciousness, which grounds the conscious activity (however weak) of unifying these representations according to a concept.

Moreover, our representations can only be unified by a concept if they are in fact the distinct and absolute unities contained in their original moments of apprehension. Kant writes, "Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which, however, would not be represented as such if the mind did not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions on one another: for *as contained in one moment* no representation can ever be anything other than absolute unity" (A99). Recognition is only possible if what is recognized is the same as it once was. If, in counting, the units that now hover before my senses were to merge or be reproduced as overlapping one another, then they would no longer be recognizable as the original representations they were. The unity of the synthesis would not be a sum, and thus the concept of the sum of these units could not be applied.

Of course, by calling a concept "something that serves as a rule" for the unification of appearances, Kant is not referring just to the rule of addition. He is referring to the fact that all concepts are normative and organize the manifold according to an ordered procedure. According to Kant, there are twelve fundamental rules of this sort, each of which is followed when an object is thought by means of them. But no matter what category is used for the synthesis of the manifold, one particular form of time is required in order for it to be possible to recognize what is reproduced by the imagination. This is time considered extensively as the basis of a series of homogeneous distinct successive moments. And when these moments are connected, they are in fact 'added' to one another. Kant writes in the second edition Deduction, "the empirical consciousness that accompanies different representations is by itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject. The latter relation (that to the identity of the subject) does not come about by my accompanying each representation with consciousness, but rather by adding (*hinzusetzen*) one representation to the other and being conscious of their synthesis" (B133).

But what if representations were not unitary or apprehended successively? Would it be possible for them to be unified by a concept? In this case, I believe, it would be difficult to find the concept that could serve as the rule for these representations. Indeed, Kant writes, "if representations reproduced one another without distinction, just as they fell together, there would in turn be no determinate connection between unruly heaps (*regellose Haufen*) of them, and no cognition at all would arise" (A121). What happens in a situation where the imagination reproduces a previously apprehended representation "without distinction," so that it "falls together," overlaps, or merges with another representation?

Or what happens in the case in which the same representation is reproduced over and over again rather than in a sequence? These, I believe, can be instances in which the imagination is working with an intensive form of temporal intuition that makes it possible for different representations to be compared not with regard to their temporal *order*, but with regard to how long they endure with respect to each other, or the rate of speed at which a sequence of moments takes place, or how the moments overlap or merge.¹⁴

This view of time can be explained with reference to Kant's First Analogy. He writes:

Our *apprehension* of the manifold of appearance is always successive, and is therefore always changing. We can therefore never determine from this alone whether this manifold, as object of experience, is simultaneous or successive, if something does not ground it which *always exists*, i.e. something *lasting* and *persisting*, of which all change and simultaneity are nothing but so many ways (*modi* of time) in which that which persists exists. . . . If one were to ascribe such a succession to time itself, one would have to think yet another time in which this succession would be possible. Only through that which persists does *existence* in different parts of the temporal series acquire a magnitude, which one calls *duration*. (A182–3/B226)

Kant's point in the First Analogy is that the concept of substance must have objective validity if we are to be able to say that objects change. If we were not able to determine something as persisting in time through the category of substance, we would not be able to say that anything about this substance has changed. For all we would know, it could just have become a completely different substance. Similarly, without something persisting, the measurement of the duration of time would be impossible. My point, however, is that in order to apprehend not the succession or simultaneity of objects of experience, but their rate of speed, or acceleration, for example, we must indeed think "another time" in which the *rate* of change

¹⁴ Uehling gives as an example of the "temporal shape" that is the result of the play of the imagination in judgments of taste the bass voice of the first four measures of Bach's Kyrie Eleison. "Leaving out the rests, to indicate silence in the pattern, we would have:———" (1971, 60–1). It should be clear from my discussion that such a pattern would be impossible for the imagination to create if it is working with just one order of time. How would it constitute a measure of the rhythm of the notes, or mark the spaces filled with voice if time were just a one-dimensional line? The marks can only indicate the duration of or absence of sound if they are made with respect to an external measure. Without this, we could not measure how long the silence lasts. In order for there to be silence in the music, or for time to be considered as empty, it must be understood as a two-dimensional form and not as a line. Only in this way is it possible to measure not the number of points that succeed one another, but how long each one endures and the "space" between them.

can be measured. Just as one clock measures the succeeding moments of time and quantifies their duration, another clock is needed to measure whether or not those moments are accelerating. The measure produced by this second order of time is not of the moments of time considered extensively, one after the other, but is of the rate of their change, be it quick or slow. This “other time,” which can be said to be what is used to reflect upon the first measure of time, is what I am calling an intensive form of time, since, by means of it, one can measure the degree to which what is apprehended in extensive time takes up time. In other words, this form is what makes possible the intuition of intensive magnitudes. It is with regard to *this* form of time, for example, that we could compare the movement of the second hand on two different clocks to see whether it takes each of them the same time to hit the one-second mark. It is this reflective form of time that I believe the imagination uses when making a judgment of taste, where what matters is “what I make of this representation in myself, not how I depend on the existence of the object” (V:205).¹⁵ In this case, the imagination is free to play with time.¹⁶

3. INTENSIVE MAGNITUDES IN THE *CRITIQUE OF THE AESTHETIC POWER OF JUDGMENT*

According to Kant, in a judgment of taste, the faculties of imagination and understanding must be in a harmony that makes it possible for what the imagination freely presents to be in accord with the lawfulness of the understanding, although no concept of the understanding can be applied to this presentation. This particular “harmony” or “free play” of the faculties is the mental state whose universal communicability is the ground for judgments of taste as well as the pleasure we take in an object judged to be beautiful (V:217). In order to understand what

¹⁵ Theodore Gracyk suggests something similar to this (1986, 49–56). He draws a distinction between the subjective time order and the objective time order and claims that the subjective time order can contain a formlessness that is present in the feeling of the sublime. Gracyk’s conclusion, however, is very different from mine. He uses his distinction to explain how everything can be considered beautiful, whereas my distinction between intensive and extensive magnitudes is meant to explain how judgments of taste *differ* from cognition.

¹⁶ In *Kants Qualitätskategorien* (1930), Anneliese Maier similarly argues that Kant implicitly presupposes a third a priori “presentational form” for apprehending qualities, which is analogous to the a priori forms of intuition, space, and time. My view contrasts with Maier’s in that I am arguing that this third a priori form of qualitative sensibility has a distinctive temporal character.

Kant means by the harmony of the faculties, it is helpful to take literally Kant's term 'harmony' and understand the power of judgment as an instrument on which there are two strings, the understanding and the imagination. If they are stroked together in one stroke, their harmony will be rather simple. But if one is made to vibrate at a different rate than the other, the chord will be more interesting. The case is the same when the imagination does not work with the extensive form of time, which is required in order for what it apprehends to be subsumed under the understanding, but rather uses a different form of time. In this case, the reflection of the faculty of judgment on this more complicated form of harmony can result in the claim that this state is a source of pleasure. Kant writes, "all stiff regularity (whatever approaches mathematical regularity) is of itself contrary to taste: the consideration of it affords no lasting entertainment, but rather . . . it induces boredom" (V:242).

Since it is the free play of the imagination that is distinctive of judgments of taste, my task here is to show that this play is due to the freedom of the imagination from the extensive form of intuition presented in the first *Critique*, and that this is why, in judgments of taste, "it is not a matter of a determinate concept" (XX:220). However, my argument that judgments of taste require an intensive form of intuition might seem to be weakened by the fact that Kant does not explicitly discuss intensive magnitudes with regard to judgments of taste, whereas he does discuss them in the *Critique of Pure Reason* with regard to judgments of cognition. If my view is right, why does Kant not make it explicit in the third *Critique* that judgments of taste involve an intensive form? I think the answer to this question is that in the third *Critique*, Kant is not primarily concerned with the forms of intuition by means of which sensible objects are given to us.¹⁷ Rather, he is interested in the norms and justifications for a priori judgments of taste, which are judgments of the necessity of the subjective feeling of pleasure or displeasure that we have regarding certain objects that are already given to us. Still, all feelings must require some form of sensibility, and they must occur in some form of time. My aim is thus to show that an intensive form of intuition is presupposed in Kant's account of judgments of taste and that this can explain why, in such judgments, what is formed by the imagination cannot be subsumed under a concept – another point that is not explicitly justified in the third *Critique*. Although Kant does not refer to intensive forms by name, his references to the "quickening" of the faculties of the imagination of

¹⁷ See XX:222.

the understanding, our “lingering” in our contemplation of the beautiful, and the “organ of the inner sense” all suggest that such a form of intuition is required.

Still, one might ask, what is the relationship between the intensive magnitudes that Kant does refer to in the first *Critique* and those I am arguing are presupposed in the third? Although judgments of taste have the intensive form of sensibility in common with the mere sensations that Kant refers to in the first *Critique*, this does not prevent them from being distinctive. In fact, the subjective element of any aesthetic judgment does differ from mere sensations. Only aesthetic judgments involve a feeling of pleasure or displeasure. This is because, in this case, what is apprehended by the imagination is referred solely to the subject and not to any concept so as to give rise to determinate cognition (V:189). In contrast to the intensive magnitude of a sensation that, as Kant explains in the Anticipations of Perception, is a measure of the sensation of the subject with regard to an object, in an aesthetic judgment, the intensive magnitude is the measure of the subject’s sensation of her *own* mental state. And, according to Kant, the way that the subject feels his or her own state is by means of a feeling of pleasure or displeasure. In this way, the feeling of pleasure or displeasure in a judgment of taste can be said to be a pure intensive intuition, a judgment of the agreeable, an impure intensive intuition, or that of mere sense, an empirical intensive intuition. The pure form of intensive intuition makes possible the determination of the feeling of pleasure in the subject’s own mental state. As a form of empirical sensibility in the Anticipations of Perception, it is supposed to ground objective empirical judgments of the intensity of sensations of material objects.¹⁸

The function of this intensive form of intuition in Kant’s account of judgments of taste can be explained by analogy to the role in cognition of the extensive form of the intuition of space. Just as there are empirical intuitions of particular spaces, there are also empirical intuitions of intensive magnitudes. These are of the sensible qualities of objects, of how they taste, smell, feel, and so on. However, just as there is an a priori form of spatial intuition, there is also an a priori form of the intuition of intensive magnitudes. This, I will argue in the [next section](#), is the

¹⁸ Warren argues against Maier’s view that there is a third form of sensibility by pointing out that, unlike space and time, a form of pure sensibility is impossible (2001, 15). This, however, is precisely what I am arguing is possible. Like the a priori intuition of space, the *sensus communis* can ‘represent’ a feeling of pleasure absent any empirical sensation and just by means of the pure functioning of the mental faculties.

sensus communis. When what is intuited by the *sensus communis* is not an object of the external senses but the inner state of the subject, then it is the basis of a pure aesthetic judgment, or a judgment of (inner) taste. Although I can say that something I see is a square, this is different from presenting (*darstelle*) a square a priori by means of a construction of the imagination.¹⁹ Only in the second case is the intuition of a square of a pure mathematical form. Similarly, what is intuited by the *sensus communis* in a pure judgment of taste is just the activity of subjective faculties of cognition themselves as the imagination seeks to present an idea.

Before proceeding, I still need to address one of the major problems involved in considering how the imagination can be free from the understanding in judgments of taste. This concerns how it is possible to bring what is intuited by the imagination to consciousness without the unity provided by the concepts of the understanding.²⁰ I will briefly suggest how a solution to this problem also supports my view that judgments of taste involve an intensive form of intuition. Indeed, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant does not say that the imagination is independent of the understanding, only that it is free from being determined by its laws. It is therefore possible to consider the imagination to be free from the laws of understanding while still considering it to be “under” the understanding as the faculty of the unity of representations. We need to retain the idea that the imagination is in some way related to the understanding because, without any ultimate reference to the unity of apperception, which is the basis of unity in our acts of understanding, no unity of form would be possible – and even in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* we are not dealing with a mere rhapsody of perceptions. My view is that it is precisely the relationship between the understanding, which can only think what is apprehended extensively, and the imagination, which, in this case, is apprehending representations intensively, that enables the faculties to “reciprocally animate each other” (V:287). Indeed, this is the *only* way the relationship between the imagination and the understanding can be conceived in order for what is apprehended by the imagination to be, on the one hand, purposive for conceptualization by the understanding and yet, on the other hand, still not be subsumable by concepts. If what the imagination apprehends is in an extensive form, we still need a further reason why, in some cases and not others, this activity forms the basis of a judgment of taste.

¹⁹ See A713/B741.

²⁰ See Uehling (1971), Chapter 2.

If I am right that judgments of taste involve an intensive form created by the imagination, what would such form be like? Kant's discussion of the aesthetic normal idea (*Normalidee*) of beauty provides an example of the imagination at work in presenting an idea free from the laws of understanding. The form the imagination produces here is one that can still have a *harmonious relation* to the understanding but not be *determined* by the understanding. Kant writes:

It should be noted that the imagination does not only know how to recall for us occasionally signs of concepts, even after a long time, in a way that is entirely incomprehensible to us; it also knows how to reproduce the image and shape of an object out of an immense number of objects of different kinds, or even of one and the same kind; indeed, when the mind is set on making comparisons, it even knows how, by all accounts actually if not consciously, as it were to superimpose one image on another and by means of the congruence of several of the same kind to arrive at a mean that can serve them all as a common measure. Someone has seen a thousand grown men. Now if he would judge what should be estimated as their comparatively normal size, then, (in my opinion) the imagination allows a great number of images (perhaps all thousand) to be superimposed on one another, and, if I may here apply the analogy of optical presentation, in the space where the greatest number of them coincide and within the outline of the place that is illuminated by the most concentrated colors, there the *average size* becomes recognizable, which is in both height and breadth equidistant from the most extreme boundaries of the largest and smallest statures; and this is the stature for a beautiful man. (One could get the same result mechanically if one measured all thousand men, added up their heights, widths (and girths) and then divided the sum by a thousand. But the imagination does this just by means of a dynamic effect, which arises from the repeated apprehension of such figures on the organ of inner sense.) (V:233-4)

In this passage, the work of the imagination is contrasted with the mechanical process of additive measurement. Here, what could be obtained mechanically is obtained otherwise by means of a "dynamic effect, which arises from the repeated apprehension of such figures on the organ of inner sense." In this case, the apprehension of the imagination is multiple, and, as the illustration from optics shows, it is not a succession, but an overlapping of representations. Here, indeed, the imagination is apprehending representations according to an intensive form and creating a unity that can serve as the ground of the measures that can follow from it. The normal idea of beauty is thus analogous to the point of highest intensity. Moreover, the act of comparison described here is not that of finding what applies universally to all of these representations, but of finding the average between them and what they should have in common. For example, if, after overlapping all of these men, as

in Kant's example, we found that the average was six feet tall, it is still possible that none of the men is exactly six feet tall. In this case, the "concept that this comparison makes possible" would not be able to recognize the objects that are supposed to fall under it. When we actually do form a concept by means of comparison, this is done extensively, so to speak, by lining up all of the images and seeing what is the same in each of them. Kant writes, "to reflect (or consider) is to hold given presentations up to, and compare them with, either other presentations or one's cognitive power [itself] in reference to a concept that this comparison makes possible" (XX:211). The discursive concept that is supposed to result from this comparison would then apply universally to the representations that formed the basis of the original comparison.²¹ However, in that case, where a concept is made possible, there would be cognition, not a judgment of taste.

Although Kant's example here is meant to explain what an archetype or ideal of the beautiful might be, and not to explain the free beauty that is the object of a pure judgment of taste, the activity of the imagination that he describes in this passage is still common to both pure judgments of taste and the ideal of beauty. An ideal of beauty does not belong to the object of an entirely pure judgment of taste because it is the representation of an individual thing that is an instance of a concept of reason. As such, the ideal of beauty is determined by a concept and therefore cannot be the object of a pure judgment of taste. In his discussion of the ideal of beauty, however, Kant makes the distinction between two elements that are involved in this ideal. The first is the aesthetic normal idea; the second is the idea of reason (V:233). The aesthetic normal idea is a mere image, an intuition of the imagination. The idea of reason, on the other hand, is that principle by which the ends of humanity are judged to be presented in the figure of the human being. The aesthetic normal idea itself, which I have argued is produced by the imagination when it works independently of the understanding, is, however, not a beauty fixed by a concept of objective purposiveness but is what is still free from this concept, and hence is a vague beauty. This intuition of the imagination, as the passage quoted previously explains, is not a recollected image produced by a concept, but rather an intense image that is the work of the imagination alone, which creates an "unruly heap" by means

²¹ See Henry Allison's discussion of "universalizing comparison" in the production of schemata in *Kant's Theory of Taste* (2001, 24–30). It is noteworthy that in his discussion of comparison, Allison does not mention the passage I have cited.

of superimposition from which some common measure can possibly be found.

The normal idea, Kant explains, is

not derived from the proportions taken from experience, *as determinate rules*; rather it is in accordance with it that rules for judging first become possible. It is the image for the whole species, hovering among all the particular and variously diverging intuitions of individuals, which nature used as the archetype underlying her productions in the same species, but does not seem to have fully achieved in any individual. It is by no means the entire *archetype* of *beauty* in this species, but only the form that constitutes the indispensable condition of all beauty, and so merely the *correctness* in the presentation of the species. (V:235)

The aesthetic normal idea (which is an individual intuition of the imagination) constitutes the indispensable condition of all beauty, since it is the image produced by the imagination at play in making comparisons between objects of many different kinds. It is an image, or form, that hovers among various individuals. This form is not produced under the guidance of a concept that would direct the imagination to recall a representation previously apprehended in an extensive form of time, but is the result of the play of the imagination in superimposing many images into one that can be apprehended in one moment in time. When the imagination apprehends in this way and the understanding tries to subsume this image under its laws, the subsequent relationship between the two faculties is the basis for a judgment of taste.

This relationship is the harmony that is created when the two mental powers, working in different “meters,” entertain each other with the indeterminate purpose of making what the imagination apprehends subsumable under the laws of the understanding. Kant writes:

The regularity that leads to the concept of an object is of course the indispensable condition (*conditio sine qua non*) of grasping the object in a single representation and determining the manifold in its form. This determination is an end with regard to cognition; and in relation to this it is also always connected with satisfaction (which accompanies the accomplishment of any aim, even a merely problematic one). But then it is merely the approval of the solution, and not a free and indeterminately purposive entertainment of the mental powers with that which we call beautiful, where the understanding is in the service of the imagination and not vice versa. (V:242)

Here we see how a judgment of beauty is based on the activity that occurs when the imagination apprehends in an intensive form and the understanding tries to follow the activity of the imagination and grasp the form

the imagination creates under rules that can only be used for what has been apprehended extensively.

According to Kant, the pleasure we take in a beautiful object is “the very consciousness of the merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers of the subject in the case of a representation through which an object is given” (V:222). This play is precisely that between the multiple apprehensions of a representation by the imagination to form an image of the highest intensity and the understanding seeking to make discursive and uniform this reinforcement of representations. Kant writes, “we *linger* over the consideration of the beautiful, because this contemplation strengthens (*stärkt*) and reproduces itself” (V:222). This play promotes such a lingering contemplation, because it is none other than the reinforcing and reproducing activity of the imagination itself as it tries to create an intense image, and the activity of the understanding as it tries to think this as contained in one moment of time.²² This activity is indeed distinctive of the mental state that is required for a judgment of beauty, since it is the state of freely coming up with a standard of value. A condition for being a beautiful object is thus that its form not be uniform, and that it therefore require an intensive form of mental activity to find some unity to all of its various aspects. Terms describing a beautiful object as having a richness or depth attest to the intuitive correctness of Kant’s view that a beautiful object is one that enables the mind to find multiple forms in the same object.

4. THE *SENSUS COMMUNIS*

So far, I have argued that what distinguishes aesthetic judgments from cognitive judgments is the intensive form in which the imagination creates an image or intuition of the manifold. It is because of this difference in the form of intuition that aesthetic judgments are not based on concepts, since concepts can only recognize what has been apprehended in an extensive form of time. I will now briefly indicate how the condition for the normativity of judgments of taste, what Kant calls “a common sense,” is the *a priori* form of intensive magnitudes that makes possible the intuition of the intensive forms created by the imagination.

The *sensus communis* is the condition of the possibility of intuiting a formal intensive intuition presented by the imagination, such as that which is judged to be beautiful. As such, I will argue, it is also the basis

²² A view similar to my own here can be found in a recent article by Fred Rush Jr. (2001).

of the particular kind of universality claimed in a judgment of taste. For Kant, judgments of taste are normative because they require that the subjective feeling of pleasure or displeasure one takes in an object also be felt by everyone. In other words, they are claims that my judgment is an example of the standard of judging that ought to be used by everyone in making judgments of taste and thus that they ought to feel the same pleasure in a judgment of taste that I do. The common sense, I will argue, is what makes it possible to claim that the feeling produced by the cognitive faculties when the imagination and the understanding are in a state of free play, is a feeling that “ought” to be shared by everyone and is therefore normative. In this way, I can answer a question that is central to current discussions of Kant’s third *Critique*,²³ namely, how the normativity of, and the pleasure taken in, judgments of taste are necessarily related. My claim is that what grounds the normativity of judgments of taste is the *sensus communis* considered as an intensive form of sense, or *sensus communis aestheticus*, as opposed to an extensive form of sense. And what the *sensus communis* senses is precisely the pleasure taken in the particular relationship of the imagination and the understanding that occurs in a judgment of taste.

As the faculty that provides the transcendental condition for the possibility of universally communicating a mental state, the *sensus communis*, like space and time, is a form of sense. According to Kant, the *sensus communis* is the subjective “sense” possessed by each of us that makes communication possible. It is a “faculty for judging that in its reflection takes account (*a priori*) of everyone else’s way of representing in thought. . . . Now this happens by one holding his judgment up not so much to the actual as to the merely possible judgment of others, and putting himself into the position of everyone else, merely by abstracting from the limitations that contingently attach to our own judging” (V:294). The *sensus communis* thus makes possible the communicability of a judgment by enabling us to see what in our own private judgment would be

²³ In what follows, I am in slight disagreement with the recent work of Hannah Ginsborg. In “Reflective Judgment and Taste” (1990b), Ginsborg argues that in a judgment of taste, “the act of judgment which precedes the pleasure, is . . . identical with the act through which the pleasure is judged to be universally valid” (72). My claim is that the *basis* for the distinctive pleasure taken in the harmony of the faculties is the *same* basis for the communicability of this pleasure and that this is why the two forms are the same. This basis is the *sensus communis*, considered as an intensive form of sense. It is indeed noteworthy that nowhere in her argument for the normativity of the mental state involved in a judgment of taste does Ginsborg mention the *sensus communis*.

held in common with others. But what exactly does the *sensus communis* sense? It does not sense others' mental states directly; it is a sense for our own mental state that can determine whether this state is something that we can have in common with others. The *sensus communis* is thus a 'common sense' in more than one way. It is a sense we have in common for a mental state we can have in common. In addition to this, the *sensus communis* is, in the Aristotelian sense, a sense for what is common among one's own cognitive faculties and thus of the relationship between the cognitive faculties. In fact, Kant describes the *sensus communis* as that "by which, however, we do not mean any external sense but rather the effect of the free play of our cognitive powers" (V:238).

What the *sensus communis* senses is thus the relationship between the cognitive faculties that produces a mental state of "animation," "harmony," or "quickenening," Kant writes:

[I]f cognitions are to be able to be communicated, then the mental state, i.e. the disposition of the cognitive powers for a cognition in general, and indeed that proportion which is suitable for making cognition out of a representation (whereby an object is given to us) must also be capable of being universally communicated. . . . But this disposition of the cognitive powers has a different proportion depending on the difference of the objects that are given. Nevertheless, there must be one in which this inner relationship is optimal for the animation of both powers of the mind (the one through the other) with respect to cognition (of given objects) in general; and this disposition cannot be determined except through the feeling (not by concepts). (V:238–9)

When the cognitive powers are in a certain "optimal" relationship, we have cognition. And when they are in a relationship with a different proportion of activity, this produces a judgment of taste. This proportion, I have argued, occurs when the object given to the mind is one that is intuited by the imagination in an intensive form. The *sensus communis* is the faculty that makes possible the feeling of our mental state whatever the proportion of the relationship between the faculties. However, its capacity to make sensible this "quickenened" state of mind is the essential feature of the *sensus communis* and what explains its role as the necessary condition for universal communicability of judgments of taste.

Although the *sensus communis* is the form that makes possible the intuition of any mental state, whatever proportion the cognitive faculties are in, its distinctive function is to serve as the basis for the normativity of the pleasurable state that occurs when the imagination is in a state of free play. Judgments of cognition do not *require* the *sensus communis* in order

to be universally communicable. They are objective. Since they have a determinate objective principle, anyone making a judgment in accordance with that principle is also claiming that her judgment is unconditionally necessary and hence communicable (V:237). Judgments of taste, however, require the communicability of the judgment for their normativity. This is precisely what is distinctive about them (a fact that has been overlooked by some commentators).²⁴ This is why Kant writes that “taste can be called a *sensus communis* with greater justice than can the healthy understanding and that the aesthetic power of judgment rather than the intellectual can bear the name of a communal sense. (One could designate taste as the *sensus communis aestheticus* (and) common human understanding as *sensus communis logicus*)” (V:295/295n).

Kant describes the normativity of judgments of taste by saying that the necessary liking required of the object of a judgment of taste is a “should, i.e. the objective necessity of the flowing together (*Zusammenfließen*) of the feeling of everyone with that of each” (V:240). His claim is that this necessary flowing together of everyone’s feeling is based on the *sensus communis* as a sense that is common to all *for* what is common to all. It is noteworthy that Kant’s use of the word ‘flowing’ here is reminiscent of his discussion of flowing magnitudes in the Anticipations of Perception. The *sensus communis* here functions as the measure of intensive magnitudes in contrast to the units of extensive magnitude. But in this case, the intensive magnitude being measured is not a particular sensible representation apprehended by the imagination in its freedom, but human sensibility as such, “the flowing together of everyone’s feeling.” In this way, it functions as the basis of the normative feeling that is claimed in judgments of beauty. When I claim that something is beautiful, I do not merely demand that someone else agrees with me, in the sense of adding her judgment to mine and saying she thinks so too. It is not that I require others to line up and vote the same way as I do. Rather, I demand that they *share* my feeling of pleasure in the object. Indeed, I do not think that my judgment could count as a judgment of taste unless I believe everyone ought to agree with me. And if I do make such a claim and others disagree with me, I don’t merely feel a difference between us, but alienated from an important aspect of humanity, namely, a shared sensibility. Because the *sensus communis* is intensive in form, it is a shared sense. In fact, Kant

²⁴ I therefore disagree with Allison’s claim that in §21 Kant argues that common sense is a condition of cognition (2001, 157). Instead, it is a condition of the communicability of cognition.

writes that a person who thinks in this way, from the position of everyone else and with a “broad mind,” puts his talents to “intensive” (*intensiven*) use (V:295).

This relation of part to whole, of one sensing subject to the other sensing subjects, is thus not a relation of one unit to the total aggregate of units. It is not a relation of whole numbers. Instead it is an intensive or flowing quantum in which each part is measured as a degree of the whole, and which has value only with regard to the whole, just as in the example of the silver discussed earlier. In other words, my feeling of pleasure in a judgment of taste only has any worth, or only counts as an appropriate feeling of pleasure, if I can assume as a standard a unity, or coalition, of judging subjects. Indeed, what Kant calls the “problem of a deduction of judgments of taste,” namely,

[h]ow is a judgment possible which, merely from *one’s own* feeling of pleasure in an object, independent of its concept judges the pleasure, as attached to the representation of the same object in *every other subject a priori*, i.e. without having to wait for the assent of others? (V:288)

has the same strangeness Kant ascribes to the principle of the Anticipations of Perception:

If it were supposed that there is something which can be cognized *a priori* in every sensation, as sensation in general (without a particular one being given), then this would deserve to be called an anticipation in an unusual sense, since it seems strange to anticipate experience precisely in what concerns its matter, which one can only draw out of it. (A167/B209)

A judgment of taste is an anticipation in the same way as the claim that every possible object of sensation has an intensive magnitude is, since a judgment of taste claims *a priori* of all subjects that they must experience the same pleasure in an object, and it does so prior to the reception of their assent. The basis of both anticipations is an intensive form. With regard to the real in appearances, we can anticipate that it has a degree that can be the object of sensation. With regard to the feeling of other subjects, we must assume that the value of each of us as evaluating subjects depends on a common sensibility that must be shared.

I have argued that the difference between cognitive judgments and judgments of taste, with regard to both their structure and their claim to normativity, can be explained by means of one point of distinction: The former involve extensive forms, whereas the latter involve intensive

forms. I believe that this one distinction can solve many of the puzzles involved in trying to figure out how, for Kant, the same group of mental faculties can, in one instance, claim that its experience is of a fact and, in another instance, claim that something is beautiful. Hopefully, it can also begin to provide an account of the particular absorption, or intensity, that pertains only to aesthetic experience.

The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited

Paul Guyer

1. The concept of the free yet harmonious play between the cognitive powers of imagination and understanding is the central concept in Kant's explanation of the experience of beauty and his analysis of the judgment of taste. In Kant's view, when I make a judgment of taste, I assert that the pleasure I take in a particular object is one that under ideal circumstances should be felt by any other observer of the object as well. Such a judgment therefore asserts the "subjectively universal validity" of my pleasure in the object (*CPJ*, §8, 5:215), thus making a claim about that pleasure; but it also makes this claim on the basis of the feeling of pleasure itself rather than on the basis of the subsumption of its object under any determinate concept – this is indeed what makes the judgment an "aesthetic" judgment (*CPJ*, §1, 5:203–4; *FI*, VIII, 20:229). In order for me justifiably to claim subjectively universal validity for my feeling of pleasure, Kant supposes, that pleasure must be based in some condition of cognitive powers that are themselves common to all human beings; but since, as Kant assumes, the judgment of taste and the feeling of pleasure that grounds it cannot be determined by the subsumption of its object under any determinate concept, that pleasure cannot be due to the ordinary cognition of an object, which consists precisely in the subsumption of the manifold of sensibility induced by the object and presented to the understanding by the imagination under a determinate concept, but must instead arise from some relation of the imagination and understanding that does not depend upon such a subsumption. These two conditions, Kant supposes, can be satisfied only by a state of free yet harmonious play between those cognitive powers.

2. But the concept of the harmonious free play of imagination and understanding is obscure, and Kant's central attempts to explicate it do not obviously succeed.

(i) In the first draft of the Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant distinguishes an "aesthetic judgment of sense," which merely asserts that the subject who makes it takes pleasure in an object because of some "sensation . . . immediately produced by the empirical intuition of the object" that does not involve the higher powers of cognition and therefore cannot ground a claim of subjectively universal validity, from an "aesthetic judgment of reflection," which can claim such validity because it is grounded on a sensation of pleasure "which the harmonious play of the two faculties of cognition in the power of judgment, imagination and understanding, produces in the subject insofar as in the given representation the faculty of the apprehension of the one and the faculty of presentation of other other are reciprocally expeditious" (*FI*, VIII, 20:224). Here everything turns on the mysterious phrase "reciprocally expeditious."

(ii) In the published version of the Introduction, Kant writes that the feeling of pleasure that is both the subject matter and the ground for a judgment of beauty "can express nothing but [the object's] suitability to the cognitive faculties that are in play in the reflecting power of judgment, insofar as they are in play," a condition that obtains if in the "apprehension of forms in the imagination" and their "comparison" to the "faculty for relating intuitions to concepts" "the imagination (as the faculty of *a priori* intuitions) is unintentionally brought into accord with the understanding, as the faculty of concepts, through a given representation" (*CPJ*, VII, 5:189–90). This statement, like those in the first draft of the Introduction, does nothing to cash in the concept of a harmonious play or accord between imagination and understanding.

(iii) In the section of the Analytic of the Beautiful that he labels the "key to the critique of taste" (*CPJ*, §9, 5:216), in which he argues that the feeling of pleasure that grounds a judgment of taste must itself be the product of some form of judging if it is to be universally valid,¹ Kant first repeats the language of play, saying that "The powers of cognition that are set into play by" the "representation" of a beautiful object "are hereby in

¹ For my earlier discussions of the complexities of this section, see my "Pleasure and Society in Kant's Theory of Taste," in Cohen and Guyer (1982), 21–54, and Guyer (1997a), 133–41.

a free play, since no determinate concepts restricts them to a particular rule of cognition,” and “Thus the state of mind in this representation must be that of a feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general” (5:217). He then adds two new terms when he says that “The animation of both faculties (the imagination and the understanding) to an activity that is indeterminate, but yet, through the stimulus of the given representation, in unison, namely that which belongs to a cognition in general, is the sensation whose universal communicability is postulated by the judgment of taste,” a “sensation of the effect that consists in the facilitated play of both powers of the mind (imagination and understanding), enlivened through mutual agreement” (*CPJ*, §9, 5:219). These statements claim that the free, harmonious, or, as Kant says here, “facilitated” play of the cognitive powers “animates” or “enlivenes” them, but they do not explain in what facilitation or animation consist.

(iv) In the General Remark that follows the Analytic of the Beautiful, Kant sums up what he has argued to that point by saying that “it turns out that everything flows from the concept of taste as a faculty for judging the object in relation to the *free lawfulness* of the imagination,” the condition that obtains when an object provides the senses “with a form that contains precisely such a composition of the manifold as the imagination would design in harmony with the *lawfulness of the understanding* in general if it were left free by itself,” a state in which the imagination is both “*free and yet lawful by itself*” (*CPJ*, §22, 5:240–1). This varies the previous accounts of free play by suggesting that this free play is located *within* the imagination rather than in a relation *between* the imagination and the understanding while adding that this free play within the imagination is somehow *consistent* with the “lawfulness” that is characteristic of the faculty of understanding, but still does not make clear what play is.

(v) Finally, in the section that is to prepare the way for the “Deduction of pure aesthetic judgments,” which will argue that if our pleasure in beauty is grounded in a condition of cognitive faculties that are universally shared, then it must be universally sharable itself, by explaining how our pleasure in beauty is in fact grounded in a condition of the cognitive faculties, Kant puts all his previous terms together. Here he writes that “the judgment of taste must rest on a mere sensation of the reciprocally animating imagination in its *freedom* and the understanding with its *lawfulness*, thus on a feeling that allows the object to be judged in accordance with the purposiveness of the representation (by means of which an object is given) for the promotion of the faculty of cognition

in its free play” – and then adds one more unexplained idea when he writes that “taste, as a subjective power of judgment, contains a principle of subsumption, not of intuitions under concepts, but of the *faculty* of intuitions or presentations (i.e., of the imagination) under the *faculty* of concepts (i.e., the understanding), insofar as the former *in its freedom* is in harmony with the latter *in its lawfulness*” (CPJ, §35, 5:297). This idea of the subsumption of the faculty of imagination under the faculty of understanding is not transparent, since the only conception of subsumption that Kant uses elsewhere in his works is that of the subsumption of a manifold under a determinate concept, whether a manifold of empirical intuitions under an empirical concept or a manifold of specific concepts under some more generic concept. So this notion of subsumption could hardly explain all of Kant’s previous accounts of the free and animating play of the cognitive powers.

3. The opacity of all these attempted elucidations of the idea of the free yet harmonious play of imagination and understanding has naturally brought forth numerous attempts to interpret them. These interpretations can be divided into two main classes. Many interpretations of Kant’s concept of the free play of the faculties explain this as a state of mind in which the manifold of representations furnished by the perception of an object satisfies all of the conditions for normal cognition of an object *except for that of the actual application of a determinate concept to the manifold*. If cognition itself is equated with the subsumption of a manifold of intuitions under a determinate concept – as Kant suggests when he famously states that “Intuition and concepts therefore constitute the elements of all our cognition, so that neither concepts without intuition corresponding to them in some way nor intuition without concepts can yield a cognition” (A74/B50) – then on this interpretation, the harmony of imagination and understanding would be a state of mind that satisfies all the conditions for cognition except the final condition that would transform it into actual cognition. For this reason, I propose to call such interpretations ‘precognitive’ interpretations of the harmony of the faculties. The key task for all such interpretations, of course, is to explain why we are pleased, indeed especially pleased, with a state of mind that falls short of satisfying all of the conditions for ordinary cognition. An alternative class of interpretations maintains that the free play of the faculties does not satisfy all but one of the normal conditions for cognition, but rather that it satisfies all of them, although only in an indeterminate way: Instead of suggesting *no* determinate concept for the manifold of intuition that it furnishes, a beautiful object suggests an indeterminate or

open-ended *manifold* of concepts for the manifold of intuition, allowing the mind to flit back and forth playfully and enjoyably among different ways of conceiving the same object without allowing or requiring it to settle down on one determinate way of conceiving the object. We can call such interpretations ‘multicognitive’ in order to convey that on this sort of account the free play is precisely among a multiplicity of possible concepts and hence cognitions suggested by the beautiful object.²

A particularly clear statement of the precognitive interpretation of the harmony of the faculties is offered by Dieter Henrich when he writes that since on Kant’s account we must be able to assert a judgment of taste “without having a description of the object at our disposal,” this ability “is readily explained in terms of a cognitive process that precedes the process of concept formation in principle although it is compatible with it.”³ But other interpreters in the recent literature on Kant’s aesthetic theory have also offered similar accounts. In 1974, Donald Crawford wrote that “Pleasure in the beautiful results when such an ordering” of the manifold of intuition presented by an object “is achieved that the cognitive powers are in harmony: it is as if the manifold has a unity to which a concept ought to apply, even though there is no definite concept applicable.”⁴ In 1979, I wrote that on Kant’s account “there is a subjective state in which the conditions of judgment are met” and that “this state may obtain independently of the making of an actual knowledge claim about the object,”⁵ and then proposed that this be interpreted as a state in which the *goal* of cognition subjectively described, which is the unification

² Andrea Kern suggests a somewhat similar division of interpretations of the concept of free play, calling them the “material” and “hermeneutical” interpretations, the former after Paul de Man, who describes seeing an object free of any conceptual admixture at all as “purely material” and the latter after Hans-Georg Gadamer, who understands Kant’s concept as a precursor of his own “hermeneutic” model of understanding, on which any object is always seen against a background of possible interpretations even before we settle down on one, as we ordinarily do. See Kern (2000), 51–3. Her references are to de Man’s article “Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant,” an English version of which may be found in Silverman and Ayelesworth (1990), 87–109, and to Gadamer’s *Wahrheit und Methode*, translated as Gadamer (1992).

³ “Kant’s Explanation of Aesthetic Judgment,” in Henrich (1992), 38. Henrich here equates Kant’s requirement that the judgment of taste and hence the underlying experience of beauty be free of any *concept* that determines it with the thought that we cannot even *describe* the object of taste; this depends upon the assumption that any description of any object by means of concepts is necessarily sufficient to determine our response to it, which is certainly debatable.

⁴ Crawford (1974), 90.

⁵ This is from the first edition of *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, published in 1979. The quotation also appears in the second edition: Guyer (1997a), 66.

of our manifold of intuition, is felt to be achieved independently of the satisfaction of the ordinary *objective* condition for cognition, namely, the application of a concept – “the harmony of the faculties produces pleasure because it . . . represents a state in which a general cognitive objective . . . is fulfilled without the guarantee ordinarily provided by the subsumability of intuitions under concepts.”⁶ I further suggested that this state could be interpreted as one in which the first two syntheses that Kant describes in the theory of threefold synthesis in the Transcendental Deduction of the categories in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which are the “synthesis of apprehension in the intuition” and the “synthesis of reproduction in the imagination,” are felt to take place even without the completion of the final form of synthesis, namely, the “synthesis of recognition in the concept.”⁷ As I put it, “The harmony of the faculties is then a state in which, somehow, a manifold of intuition is run through and held together as a unity by the imagination without the use of a concept.”⁸ And in 1982, Ralf Meerbote wrote that “the object of a pure judgment of taste is the presence . . . of conformity of the apprehended features of manifold to the *invariant* features of the understanding,” although “this is to *differ* from reflection toward the production of a specific concept.”⁹ All of these statements¹⁰ suggest an interpretation of the harmonious play of imagination and understanding as a state in which the mind grasps the unity of the manifold of intuition presented by an object, which would ordinarily both lead to and depend upon the application of a determinate concept of the object to that manifold, without actually applying such a concept.

There are variants of this straightforward version of the precognitive interpretation as well. Hannah Ginsborg has argued that “in the experience of an object as beautiful . . . I take my imaginative activity in the

⁶ Ibid., 74.

⁷ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A98–103.

⁸ Guyer (1997a), 76.

⁹ Ralf Meerbote, “Reflection on Beauty,” in Cohen and Guyer (1982), 55–86, at 72. Where I have indicated an ellision in the quotation from Meerbote, he had written “or absence”; these words express the assumption that negative as well as positive aesthetic judgments are pure judgments of taste. This has been the subject of an extensive controversy in recent literature, which I will not discuss in this essay; for my view, see “Kant on the Purity of the Ugly” in Guyer (2005).

¹⁰ As well as the more recent statement by Jürgen Stolzenberg that Kant can only mean “that in the manifold elements of an individual object given in intuition a certain connection of these elements can be perceived, which is not producible or alterable at will or in accordance with contingent rules of association, but for which there is nevertheless no general conceptual expression applicable to other objects”; see Stolzenberg (2000), 10.

perception of the object to be as it ought to be in the primitive sense, which means that I have no conception of *how* it ought to be except that afforded by the example of my activity itself: namely, the indeterminate conception that it ought to be *this way*,"¹¹ but also that the ability to have such an indeterminate sense that an object is as it ought to be is a precondition of the general ability to learn to apply concepts to objects, which express in a determinate way how objects falling under those concepts ought to be; thus, on her account, the ability to have aesthetic experience is a precondition for having ordinary cognitive experience.¹² Her account is unusual not merely in describing aesthetic experience as a precognitive state, but also in insisting that this precognitive state is a precondition for any ordinary cognition.

Another variant on the precognitive view is that offered by Rudolf Makkreel. Makkreel is concerned with the compatibility of Kant's explanation of the experience of beauty with his general epistemology (as are, of course, other advocates of the precognitive interpretation as well), and addresses this issue thus: Interpreting the Transcendental Deduction of the first *Critique* to demonstrate the applicability of the *categories* or "pure concepts of the understanding," that is, such completely general and abstract concepts such as 'magnitude,' 'substance,' 'causation,' and so on, to the objects of empirical intuition, he proposes that "The 'free conformity' of the aesthetic imagination to the laws of the understanding means that the imagination may not violate the categorial framework of the understanding, although it may explicate possibilities left open by that framework,"¹³ and then that in the experience of beauty, "the imagination schematizes without using *empirical* concepts," so that "The aesthetic judgment directly compares the apprehended form of an object with the way categories are generally schematized in relation to the form of time."¹⁴ On this account, the idea is not that in the experience of beauty we are simply conscious of some sort of unity in the manifold of intuition prior to and independently of the application of any determinate and thus presumably empirical concept to the object; rather, we are somehow conscious that the manifold satisfies one of the particular temporal structures that "schematizes" the pure concepts of the understanding, such as the rule-governed succession of states of affairs in time that is the

¹¹ Ginsborg (1997a), 70.

¹² *Ibid.*, 53–9, 73–4.

¹³ Makkreel (1990), 47.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

pattern of causation that schematizes the pure category of ground and consequence – but without applying any determinate, empirical causal concept to the manifold. It is as if we somehow feel that the manifold satisfies the general concept of causation without being subsumable under any particular causal concept, such as the concept of combustion or digestion as a type of causation.¹⁵

The main alternative to the precognitive interpretation is the multicognitive interpretation of the harmony of the faculties. Gerhard Seel, for example, wrote in 1988 that on Kant's account "the harmony of the cognitive powers is nothing other than the stimulation of a successful attempt at cognition,"¹⁶ and then proposed that such stimulation would be best understood – although in this he supposed he was going beyond Kant's *ipsissima verba* – as if "In the case of the *aesthetic* function the intuitively given is not subsumed under a *determinate* concept, but under a multitude of concepts playfully applied to it."¹⁷ Two recent prominent interpreters have also advocated versions of this approach, although without evincing Seel's concern that they might be reconstructing rather than merely interpreting Kant. Fred Rush writes that in the case of "aesthetic reflection and the harmony of the faculties . . . perception is a taking of the manifold as having one among many potential possible characters . . . a state in which it is implicitly registered that what is perceived is one way, but that does not foreclose, and indeed it rests upon, other ways it might be subject to synthesis."¹⁸ "What Kant envisions is a potentially endless ranging over the manifold of intuition by the imagination, engaged in the activity of modeling it as unifiable in any of the multifarious ways that the spatial and temporal properties of that manifold permit."¹⁹ And although his attempts to characterize the harmony of the faculty are not obviously univocal, Henry Allison seems to be attracted primarily to the multicognitive interpretation of the harmony of the faculties. He writes that the free play of the imagination "does not issue in the exhibition

¹⁵ In his book, Makkreel goes on to argue that the categories in fact must be schematized through empirical concepts, and that this is accomplished through the discovery of empirical concepts within a *system* of such concepts, which is accomplished by the reflecting use of judgment (58–9). But this use of reflecting judgment, which Kant describes in the Introductions to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* but not in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, is clearly entirely distinct from the *aesthetic* use of this power of judgment.

¹⁶ Seel (1988), 344.

¹⁷ Ibid., 349.

¹⁸ Rush (2001), 52.

¹⁹ Ibid., 58.

of a determinate concept,” but rather in “what might be described as the exhibition of the form of a concept in general (but not any concept in particular).” It is not clear what “the form of a concept in general” might be thought to be, and perhaps it could be understood as whatever degree of spatiotemporal organization or unity of a manifold might be thought to be a necessary condition for the application of a concept to it, thus linking Allison’s interpretation to what I have called the precognitive approach. But Allison continues, “the basic idea is presumably that the imagination in its free play stimulates the understanding by occasioning it to entertain fresh conceptual possibilities, while, conversely, the imagination, under the general direction of the understanding, strives to conceive new patterns of order.”²⁰ This seems clearly to fall on the side of the multicognitive interpretation of the harmony of the faculties: Read literally, Allison’s statement suggests that both the imagination and the understanding *conceive* of the object of taste in a variety of different possible ways, although somehow each faculty stimulates the other to do so.²¹

4. Now before I suggest some reasons why we should not simply choose between these two approaches but should instead look for a third alternative, I want to concede that Kant’s texts certainly provide some basis for each of these approaches. In fact, we can find support for each of these approaches in a single text, namely, in Kant’s first draft of the Introduction to the third *Critique*. In Section VIII of this text, Kant surely provides a basis for the precognitive approach when he writes that

A merely *reflecting* judgment about a given individual object, however, *can be aesthetic* if (before its comparison with others is seen), the power of judgment, which has no concept ready for the given intuition, holds the imagination (merely in the apprehension of the object) together with the understanding (in the presentation of a concept in general) and perceives a relation of the two faculties of cognition which constitutes the subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general (namely the agreement of those two faculties with each other). (*FL*, VIII, 20:223–4)

Here Kant’s statement that the imagination is involved “merely in the apprehension” of the object, since apprehension is the first stage of the threefold synthesis involved in ordinary cognition, as well as his statement

²⁰ Allison (2001), 171.

²¹ Malcolm Budd may also suggest the multicognitive approach when he writes that “the imagination’s freedom consists in its not being adequate to some particular empirical concept – all that is necessary is that it should be adequate to some empirical concept or other” (Budd 2001, 255).

that the power of judgment “has no concept ready for the given intuition,” both suggest that the harmony of the faculties is a state that logically and even temporally precedes ordinary cognition, and should thus be understood as a state in which the manifold is unified prior to the application of any concept to it. If so, then the “subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general” would be precisely the satisfaction of all the conditions for cognition of an object in a manifold of intuition short of the application of a concept to the manifold. Similarly, Kant’s eventual statement in the preparation for the deduction of pure aesthetic judgments that the “subjective formal condition of a judgment in general,” which is satisfied in the case of a judgment of beauty, consists “only in the subsumption of the imagination itself (in the case of a representation by means of which an object is given) under the condition that the understanding in general advance from intuitions to concepts” (*CPJ*, §35, 5:287) might be interpreted to mean that the “subjective formal condition” of the cognitive powers, which is the ground of the experience and judgment of beauty, consists in the fact that the imagination responds to a manifold of intuition as if it satisfied all the conditions of cognition short of the application of any determinate concept of an object to that manifold.

Yet advocates of the multicognitive approach can equally well appeal to another statement in Section VII of the First Introduction on behalf of their position:

If, then, the form of a given object in empirical intuition is so constituted that the *apprehension* of its manifold in the imagination agrees with the *presentation* of a concept of the understanding (though which concept be undetermined [*unbestimmt welches Begriffs*]), then in the mere reflection understanding and imagination mutually agree for the advancement of their business, and the object will be perceived as purposive merely for the power of judgment, hence the purposiveness itself will be considered as merely subjective; for which, further, no determinate concept of the object at all is required nor is one thereby generated. . . . (*FI*, VII, 20:220–1)²²

Phrases such as “though which concept be undetermined” or “undetermined which concept” intimate that the aesthetically pleasing manifold does not merely suggest the satisfaction of some precondition for cognition, but rather suggests *some* concept for the object it presents

²² The first part of this passage is cited by Budd immediately following the sentence previously quoted from him (see Budd 2001, 255), and by Rush immediately preceding the second sentence previously quoted from him (see Rush 2001, 58).

without suggesting or “generating” *any particular* concept, something that we could most readily understand if we take it to mean that it suggests *multiple* concepts without forcing or allowing us to choose among them.

5. In spite of the fact that there is textual evidence for both the precognitive and multicognitive interpretations of the harmony of the faculties, however, there are also a variety of problems with each. The most obvious – and often recognized²³ – problem with the precognitive approach is that on this approach it may seem as if *everything* ought to be beautiful, or at least capable of being found beautiful. That is, if our feeling of beauty in a given manifold is a response to the fact that it satisfies a condition that must be satisfied in every case of cognition, even if it does not satisfy *all* of the conditions that must be satisfied for actual cognition, then why don’t we experience beauty in every case of cognition?

A variety of answers to this obvious problem have, of course, been suggested, or suggest themselves. One proposal would be that the ubiquity of beauty is not a problem for Kant at all – that Kant embraces the conclusion that we do or at least should be able to find every object beautiful. This proposal would see Kant as anticipating “aesthetic attitude” theories from Schopenhauer to the midtwentieth century, that is, the view that with the right – typically, disinterested – attitude any object *can* be found to be beautiful, although, as Schopenhauer argues, the difference between the artistic genius and the rest of us may be the ease with which the former can adopt this attitude.²⁴ However, there seems to be no evidence that Kant ever held this view. While his paradigms of free beauties of nature are certainly ordinary objects – hummingbirds and crustacea – rather than exalted works of human artistry, he never suggests that *every* ordinary object can be found to be beautiful.²⁵

A second proposal has been that Kant thinks that every object *has* been found beautiful by us on our way to cognition, but that ordinarily we forget this, and have to turn to art in order to *recover* this experience of

²³ See for example Meerbote, “Reflection on Beauty,” in Cohen and Guyer (1982), 81, Savile (1987), and Budd (2001, 251n6).

²⁴ Schopenhauer (1958), §41, 210.

²⁵ He does eventually assert that virtually every object – except those that arouse loathing – can be the object of a beautiful *representation* in art (*CPJ*, §48, 5:312), but that is quite a different point; it does not imply that every object can be found beautiful in its own right, that is, directly rather than through a representation of it, which is a numerically and qualitatively distinct object from it.

pleasure.²⁶ This proposal might initially seem to have a textual basis in Kant's remark that "we no longer detect any noticeable pleasure in the comprehensibility of nature and the unity of its division into genera and species, by means of which alone empirical concepts are possible through which we cognize it in its particular laws; but it must certainly have been there in its time, and only because the most common experience would not be possible without it has it gradually become mixed up with mere cognition and is no longer specially noticed" (*CPJ*, VI, 5:187). However, in this passage from the Introduction, Kant is not describing aesthetic judgment at all, but a different application of the power of reflecting judgment, its role in finding determinate concepts of species and genera by means of which to classify the particular objects of nature,²⁷ and he gives no hint that he thinks that this pattern of an initial pleasure that is forgotten but may then be recovered is characteristic of the judgment of beauty.

Finally, the most common solution proposed for this problem is that not every object of ordinary cognition is or even can be found to be beautiful, because the satisfaction of the precondition for ordinary cognition that is characteristic of the experience of beauty occurs only in special circumstances. There are two ways in which this solution can be developed. One idea is that the mind ordinarily proceeds through all the necessary conditions of cognition, right through and past the preconceptual conditions and up to the application of a determinate concept to the object, but that in some cases it is possible for the mind to abstract from the application of a concept to the object – to turn its attention away from a concept, or away from the task of applying determinate concepts to objects – and to become aware of the unity that the manifold of intuition has even apart from this concept.²⁸ However, it is by no means clear that

²⁶ See Bernstein (1992), 55–63.

²⁷ See also footnote 16.

²⁸ For example, Budd writes that "the only viable interpretation of Kant's view is that in judging an object's beauty, its being an instance of that kind must not be allowed to figure in the process of reflection, which must focus solely on the object's form. In fact, it is easy to see that the reflection involved in a judgement of taste must allow the subject to abstract from what the object is seen to be" (2001, 253). Anthony Savile clearly formulates the danger that on a precognitive account everything might turn out to be beautiful, and then seems to suggest that we have a choice about how judgment is to be "conducted," either by determining judgment, in accordance with the guidelines imposed by some concept, or by reflecting judgment, free from such guidelines (Savile 1987, 140), a freedom that presumably depends upon its being in our power to abstract from any determinate concept that applies to the object.

Kant thinks that it is always in our own power to adopt the “aesthetic attitude” of disinterestedness and thereby perceive beauty where we otherwise would not. In his discussion of the distinction between free and adherent beauty in §16, he states that “A judgment of taste in regard to an object with a determinate internal end would be pure only if the person making the judgment either had no concept of this end or abstracted from it in his judgment,” and then seems to suggest that it is always possible for anyone to abstract from such a concept because a dispute between one person who is making a judgment of free beauty about an object and another who is making a judgment of adherent beauty about it could always be resolved if the latter would only abstract from the concept involved in his judgment of adherent beauty (*CPJ*, 5:231).²⁹ In his discussion of the ideal of beauty in the next section, however, Kant seems to imply the opposite when he argues that if one recognizes something as a work of art, for example an archaeological artifact, then “the fact that [it is] regarded as a work of art is already enough to require one to admit that one relates [its] shape to some sort of intention and to a determinate purpose” (*CPJ*, §17, 5:236n), even if one does not actually know what that purpose is. This suggests that it is not always in one’s power to abstract or divert one’s attention from a concept that applies to an object.³⁰

But maybe the solution lies in the *objects* of taste: That is, maybe some but not all objects are beautiful because some but not all objects make it particularly easy to grasp the unity or harmony of the manifolds they present independently of any concept that applies to them. As Malcolm Budd puts it, in the case of a beautiful object, its “structure will in reflection on its form both be a continuing stimulus to the imagination and make easy the task of the understanding. . . . [A]n object’s form will be contemplated with disinterested pleasure when the manifold combined by the imagination is both rich enough to entertain the imagination in its combinatory activity and such as to facilitate the understanding’s detection of regularity within it.”³¹ Once again, there is certainly textual evidence for ascribing such a view to Kant. Earlier, I quoted a sentence from the conclusion of §9 where Kant refers to the “*facilitated* (*erleichterten*) play of both powers of the mind” (5:219; emphasis added), and this reference to ‘facilitation’ is not unique, but had in fact long been used by Kant: One

²⁹ I return to the adherent beauty later in this section and in Section 9.

³⁰ I have discussed this tension at greater length in Guyer (1997a), 220–5.

³¹ Budd (2001), 258.

of his earliest notes on aesthetics (found among his notes on the chapter on “empirical psychology” in Baumgarten’s *Metaphysica*) states that “In everything that is to be approved in accordance with taste there must be something that facilitates [*erleichtert*] the differentiation of the manifold (delineation)” as well as “something that advances comprehensibility (relations, proportions), something that makes possible taking it all together [*Zusammennehmung*] (unity), and finally something that promotes the distinction from everything [else] possible (precision).”³² So there is no doubt that the idea that some objects particularly facilitate our grasp of them in ways that others do not, and that this fact is intimately connected to their beauty, was a part of Kant’s thought, and interpreters are hardly mistaken to observe this.

Nevertheless, there are philosophical difficulties with the idea that our response to beauty depends on some cognitive process that precedes our application of a determinate concept to an object or even on the possibility of abstracting from such a concept. Before turning to these problems, however, I will discuss some problems with the multicognitive interpretation, which in the end must also contend with these deeper issues. First, there are two obvious textual difficulties with the multicognitive approach. One is that even if it were clear that the parenthetical phrase “*unbestimmt welches Begriffs*” (*sic*; *FI*, VII, 20:221) should be translated in a way that suggests that the mind ranges indeterminately among a multitude of determinate concepts, Kant only uses this sort of phrase, twice, in a single passage: In Section VII of the First Introduction, Kant’s other use of a similar phrase comes three paragraphs prior to the passage cited from 20:221, when he says that “In our power of judgment we perceive purposiveness insofar as it merely reflects upon a given object . . . in order to bring the empirical intuition of that object under some concept (it is indeterminate which [*unbestimmt welchen*])” (20:220).³³ This usage is not repeated in Section VIII of the First Introduction, in the published Introduction to the third *Critique*, or in the body of the work. In all of these places, Kant typically says that the experience and judgment of beauty require *no* concept, *no determinate* concept, or only the *faculty* of concepts

³² R 625 (1769? 1764–8?), 15:271; previously cited Guyer (1997a), 17–18.

³³ I here omit the continuation of this sentence, in which Kant says that we may also perceive purposiveness in mere reflection upon an object “in order to bring the laws which the concept of experience itself contains under common principles,” since this bears on the use of reflecting judgment to establish a system of empirical laws, which is a distinct form of reflecting judgment. For a full discussion of the different forms of reflecting judgment, see Guyer (2003b).

without any concept. Thus he writes: “to discover beauty . . . requires nothing but mere reflection (without any concept)” (*FI*, VIII, 20:229) and that the “contemplation” leading to a judgment of taste “is not directed to concepts” (*CPJ*, §5, 5:209); that in the state of the free play of the powers of cognition “no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition” (*CPJ*, §9, 5:217); and that “the apprehension of forms in the imagination” that grounds the response to and judgment of beauty “can never take place without the reflecting power of judgment, even if unintentionally, at least comparing them to its faculty for relating intuitions to concepts” (*CPJ*, VII, 5:190; cf also §35, 5:287). None of these phrases suggests that Kant supposes that aesthetic experience involves an *indeterminate* concept,³⁴ let alone an *indeterminate multitude* of concepts; they all suggest that the experience of beauty somehow involves our *faculty* of concepts without involving any particular concepts at all.

My second textual point is that none of Kant’s *examples* of beautiful objects and our experience of them suggests that any indeterminate multitude of concepts or conceptual possibilities is necessarily involved in such experience. Kant’s paradigmatic examples of free beauties of both nature and art, such things as hummingbirds and crustacea, designs *à la grecque* and musical fantasias, “do not represent anything, no object under a determinate concept” (*CPJ*, §16, 5:229);³⁵ instead, of course, Kant insists that the proper object of taste is pure spatial or temporal form, “*shape* or *play*,” for example design in a work of visual art or composition in a piece of music (*CPJ*, §14, 5:225). These examples do not sit well with the suggestion that the object of the experience of beauty is really a play of *concepts* or *conceptual possibilities*. And even when Kant first introduces a kind of beauty that clearly does involve a concept, namely, adherent beauty, such beauty involves only *one* concept, the concept of the intended end of the object with such beauty, with which the form of the adherently beautiful object must somehow be compatible. There is no suggestion that adherent beauty any more than free beauty involves a play among

³⁴ I should note here that Kant eventually argues that the resolution of the “antinomy of judgments of taste” does require the assumption that in some sense judgments of taste rest on an “indeterminate and also indeterminable concept,” namely, the idea of the supersensible substratum of humanity and of appearances generally (*CPJ*, §57, 5:339–40). It is questionable whether he needs such a claim to resolve the antinomy (see Guyer 1997, chapter 10), and in any case, it is not part of this claim that any indeterminate concept or multitude of concepts is part of the experience of beauty itself, rather than an underlying ground for the universal subjective validity of this experience.

³⁵ For a subtle discussion of the ambiguities of Kant’s use of the term ‘represent’ here, see Schaper (1979).

any indeterminate multitude of concepts.³⁶ Likewise, when Kant finally presents his theory of fine art, he suggests that a work of art typically has a content, an “aesthetic idea,” which connotes a “rational idea,” on the one hand, through a wealth of “attributes” or images, on the other, but he does not suggest that in the experience of a work of fine art the mind plays among a multitude of possible conceptualizations of the work of art itself (*CPJ*, §49, 5:314).

Textual evidence aside, the philosophical problem with the multicognitive approach is that it is not clear why an experience of flitting back and forth among an indeterminate multitude of concepts for a single object should be *pleasing*. To be sure, one can well imagine that *some* such experiences are pleasing, as reveries or daydreams sometimes are; but then again, the experience of ranging over an indeterminate multitude of possible concepts for an object without being able to settle on a determinate one for the object at hand is sometimes frustrating, indeed a nightmare – just imagine, or remember, going back and forth among several answers to an exam question, each of which seems plausible without one seeming conclusively correct. When Rush, for example, writes that “any beautiful thing will permit a seamless, effortless, and potentially endless series of unconscious ‘re-imaginings,’”³⁷ that sounds as if it might sometimes be pleasant – the words ‘seamless’ and ‘effortless’ (reminiscent of Kant’s term ‘*erleichtert*’) are obviously meant to sound that way – but it is not clear why an endless series of “re-imaginings” might not also be frustrating, unless, that is, it satisfies some independent criterion for aesthetic satisfaction.

Now Rush’s characterization of the free play of the faculties here does bring out one point that is not always clear in interpretations of Kant’s idea, namely, that the contemplation of the beautiful should be understood as a state of mind that is sometimes *protracted* rather than instantaneous. This is indeed suggested by Kant when he maintains that the pleasure in the beautiful “has a causality in itself, namely that of *maintaining* the state of the representation of the mind and the occupation of the cognitive powers without a further aim,” and thus that “We *linger* over the consideration of the beautiful because this consideration strengthens and

³⁶ Robert Wicks (1997) argues that we experience an object with dependent beauty as if it satisfied its end in an indeterminate multitude of ways, but he does not, like Rush or Allison, equate these with an indeterminate multitude of concepts or conceptual possibilities. So his approach is not a pure case of what I have called the multicognitive approach.

³⁷ Rush (2001), 58.

reproduces itself" (*CPJ*, §12, 5:222). In fact, he needs to say this, because the only entirely general characterization of pleasure, whether pleasure in mere sensation, in reflection, or in the determination of the will, that he thinks can be given is that "*Pleasure is a state of the mind in which a representation is in agreement with itself, as a ground, either merely for preserving itself (for the state of the powers of the mind reciprocally promoting each other in a representation preserves itself), or for producing its object*" (*FI*, VIII, 20:230–1). Pleasure is a state that we would rather prolong than end – in a way, this is the only possible definition of pleasure. But the very generality of this characteristic means that we can hardly infer from it anything particular about the pleasure *in beauty*, for example that it must be a temporally extended play among "conceptual possibilities." Rather, Kant seems to assume that states of pleasure are pleasurable from the outset, and do not depend upon their temporal duration or prolongation to become pleasurable, although precisely because they are pleasurable we are naturally disposed to prolong them.³⁸ This suggests that he does not understand the pleasure in beauty as something that could emerge only from a temporally extended play with conceptual possibilities, but rather as a state that is at least sometimes more instantaneously pleasurable – as the contemplation of a graphic design (but perhaps not a musical composition) might be – and that we would then like to prolong.

6. But the deeper philosophical problem for both precognitive and multicognitive approaches to the harmony of the faculties is that the very idea of a state of our cognitive powers that does not involve any determinate concepts is dubious. In fact, this idea is inconsistent both with an ordinary assumption about judgments of taste and with the most fundamental claims of Kant's theory of knowledge.

The ordinary assumption about judgments of taste, which Kant clearly shares with the rest of us, is that the objects of such judgments must be identified by means of particular empirical concepts and that we must be cognizant of the application of such concepts to them in order to make such judgments, just as is the case with any other kinds of judgments about objects, in spite of whatever features are distinctive of aesthetic

³⁸ Here one should no doubt add "other things being equal." Some pleasures are, of course, too intense for us really to want to prolong them very long or else accompanied with such negative consequences that we cannot on reflection want to prolong them very long.

judgments. An aesthetic judgment does not have the form “This is beautiful” but rather “This *F* is beautiful”: this hummingbird, this sunset, this painting, this symphony, this part of the garden (but not the other), this façade of the building (but not its other elevations), or the public spaces of this hotel (but not its guest rooms). And these objects or parts of objects cannot be individuated without concepts – as Wittgenstein taught us, pointing by itself won’t do.³⁹ But we didn’t have to wait for Wittgenstein to realize this: It was always evident in our practices of judgment (as Wittgenstein would have said, he was just assembling reminders). It is certainly evident in Kant’s examples of aesthetic judgments: In spite of his insistence that these judgments are in some sense independent of determinate concepts, he always supposes that they are about particular objects, which can only be individuated by means of such concepts – for example, this hummingbird, this foliage border (but not the rest of the wall), this fantasia (but not another piece in the concert) (*CPJ*, §16, 5:229), this design or pattern in the painting (but not its colors), and, for that matter, this painting (but not its frame) (*CPJ*, §14, 5:225–6). And presumably he did not think, any more than we would, that such concepts, or more precisely terms for them, are just used to tell others to what objects we are responding, to which they should also respond. For Kant, a particular concept, whether a concept such as ‘triangle’ that is to be applied to objects in pure intuition or one such as ‘plate’ or ‘dog’ that is to be applied to objects in empirical intuition, is a rule for constructing (in the case of pure intuition) or recognizing (in the case of empirical intuition) an instance of the kind of object the concept names.⁴⁰ So we could not know what object we are responding to with a pleasurable feeling of beauty, or which object we should attend to in order to confirm for ourselves another’s judgment of beauty (see *CPJ*, §32, 5:282), except by using a determinate concept to delimit some portion of our total visual or other experiential field, at or during some particular time, as the object of our attention, response, and aesthetic judgment. Thus, while Kant may well have thought that we can abstract from *some* concepts that we would ordinarily apply to possible objects of taste, in particular concepts of their intended *use* or *end* (*CPJ*, §15, 5:226–7; §16, 5:229–31), his own examples of paradigmatic judgments of taste suggest that he could not very well

³⁹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (1963), Part I, §§33–45.

⁴⁰ See *Critique of Pure Reason*, On the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding, A137–42/B176–81.

have thought that we could assess our aesthetic responses to objects or even respond to them at all without individuating them by means of ordinary concepts such as 'triangle' or 'plate', 'hummingbird' or 'painting.'

But we do not have to rely solely on Kant's examples for this conclusion. It is also implied by the most fundamental aspects of his theory of knowledge. This is hardly the place for a detailed discussion of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but a brief outline of the central argument of the Transcendental Analytic should do for our present purposes. The first *Critique* argues that it is possible for me to attach the "I think" to any representation that I have, or to include any representation in the transcendental unity of my apperception (A116; §16, B131–2); that including any representation in the transcendental unity of my apperception requires the application of one or more of the categories or pure concepts of the understanding to it (A119; §20, B143); but that the pure concepts of the understanding are in fact nothing but the forms of determinate empirical concepts, just as the pure forms of intuition are nothing but the forms of empirical intuitions (A111, 119, 125; §13, B128–9; §22, B146–7), so that the application of the *categories* to all the objects of my representation also requires the application of *determinate empirical concepts* to all of them (for example, the category of substance can only be applied to empirical intuition through the empirical concept of matter, and the concept of causation through the empirical concept of a rule-governed change in motion).⁴¹ But these premises entail that we can never be conscious of a representation at all, a fortiori of a representation of an object, a fortiori of an object of actual or potential aesthetic response and judgment, without the application of some determinate empirical concept to it. Further, we may also consider the application of a concept to a manifold that is required for the transcendental unity of apperception as bringing the faculty of understanding into a certain kind of correspondence with a manifold of sensibility reproduced by the imagination, namely, that of the synthetic unity of the manifold required and/or constituted by the application of that concept to it (A104; §17, B137). This means not only that we cannot be conscious of an object at all without applying some determinate concept to it, but also that we cannot be conscious of it at all without the existence of some form of correspondence between understanding and imagination in the experience of that object.

This brief account of the argument of the first *Critique* should be enough to show that Kant cannot have thought that beautiful objects are

⁴¹ These examples are drawn from Kant's 1786 *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*.

those to which we apply the categories without applying any determinate concepts to them, since he clearly thought that the categories are only the forms of determinate concepts and can be applied to intuitions only through determinate concepts.⁴² So how are we to understand the free yet harmonious play of imagination and understanding that is distinctive of the experience of beauty if we cannot understand it as involving the simple absence of ordinary determinate concepts of objects? The simplest answer to this would be to follow the lead of Kant's argument in §§15–16 and say that the kind of harmony of the faculties distinctive of the experience of beauty requires only the absence of any concept of the determinate intended *end* or *use* of the object of that experience. However, there are a number of difficulties with such a proposal. First, it is merely negative – it tells us nothing positive about the harmony of the faculties by means of which we might recognize the occurrence of that state. Second, it provides too inclusive a criterion of the beautiful: Surely there are many objects of our experience, if not indeed the majority of them, that either have no intended use or from whose intended use we can abstract without finding them in the least beautiful. I can find some stones beautiful and others not, but I do not have to abstract from any intended use or purpose to find the former beautiful, nor is the absence of any intended use or purpose sufficient to make me find the latter beautiful.

Most importantly, however, although Kant surely does say repeatedly that the free play of the faculties has nothing to do with the satisfaction of any end, this statement is actually too broad for his own purposes. For in the Introduction to the third *Critique*, Kant suggests that pleasure is typically connected with the attainment of an aim (*Erreichung jeder Absicht*),⁴³ although such pleasure is most noticeable (*merklich*) when the aim is attained in an unexpected way (*CPJ*, VI, 5:187); and in the discussion of the “primacy of practical reason” Kant also suggests that every power of the mind has a characteristic aim, and thus a characteristic

⁴² Earlier, I attributed this view to Rudolf Makkreel, although with the qualification expressed in footnote 16; Malcolm Budd may also suppose that the categories can be applied to objects independently of any determinate concepts at Budd (2001), 247–8.

⁴³ Strictly speaking, Kant says that the attainment of every end is connected with pleasure, not that every pleasure is connected with the attainment of some end. But since he never offers any other general explanation of pleasure – his only other general statement about pleasure, as we have already seen (*FI*, VIII, 20:230–1 and *CPJ*, §12, 5:222), is about the *consequence* of pleasure, namely, that pleasure is a state that produces a desire for its own continuation – it seems reasonable to take him as making both assumptions.

interest – “To every faculty of the mind one can attribute an *interest*, that is, a principle that contains the condition under which alone its exercise is promoted” – on the way to making his argument that the interest of practical reason (or our interest in the practical use of reason) requires us to believe in propositions that can be neither proved nor disproved by or for theoretical reasons but that are required for the rationality of moral conduct.⁴⁴ This means that the free play of the cognitive powers cannot be understood as a condition in which no ends or interests *of any kind* are involved at all, nor can it be understood simply as a condition in which no determinate interest other than that of one or more powers of the mind itself is involved, for that brings us back to a merely negative characterization of this state of mind. Instead, it must be understood as a condition in which some fundamental end or interest of the mind itself is satisfied, although in an unusual and therefore unexpected way that is still to be explained. Finally, to hold that a genuine aesthetic response cannot involve any end at all would wreak havoc with Kant’s recognition of the special cases of adherent beauty and artistic beauty, for the former is a kind of beauty that is somehow connected with the proper end of its object (*CPJ*, §16, 5:229–30), and the latter is clearly the product of intentional human action (*CPJ*, §43, 5:303–4), and must thus somehow involve an end. Since Kant does not assert that adherent beauty and artistic beauty are simply misnamed, and thus spurious kinds of beauty, it would seem that any satisfactory interpretation of the free play of imagination and understanding in the case of free beauty should be able to be extended to those kinds of beauty as well without paradox.

7. So if the free play of imagination and understanding cannot be understood either as a state of mind that involves no determinate concepts at all or even as a state of mind that involves merely no concept of an end or interest, we still face the question, how is it to be understood? My proposal is that the only way we can understand Kant’s account of the free play of the cognitive powers consistently with our own and his assumptions about the determinacy of the objects of aesthetic judgment, as well as with his assumption about the judgmental and therefore object-referring structure of consciousness itself, is by replacing the precognitive and multicognitive approaches with what I will now call a ‘metacognitive’ approach. On such an approach, the free and harmonious play of imagination and understanding should be understood as a state of mind in

⁴⁴ *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:119–21.

which the manifold of intuition induced by the perception of an object and presented by the imagination to the understanding is recognized to satisfy the rules for the organization of that manifold dictated by the determinate concept or concepts on which our recognition and identification of the object of this experience depends. It is also a state of mind in which it is felt that – or as if – the understanding’s underlying objective or interest in unity is being satisfied in a way that *goes beyond* anything required for or dictated by satisfaction of the determinate concept or concepts on which mere identification of the object depends. A beautiful object can always be recognized as an object of some determinate kind, but our experience of it always has even more unity and coherence than is required for it to be a member of that kind, or has a kind of unity and coherence that is not merely a necessary condition for our classification of it. On such an approach, the free play of imagination and understanding is not a condition that must precede any ordinary cognition, nor must we forget or abstract away from our ordinary cognition of the object to take pleasure in its beauty; nor must the experience of beauty consist in a play among alternative cognitions or conceptualizations of the object. We can, indeed we must be able to have ordinary cognition of the object, but we experience it as beautiful precisely because we experience it as inducing a degree or type of harmony between imagination and understanding – between the manifold it presents and our desire for unity – that goes beyond whatever is necessary for ordinary cognition. And this explains why we can ordinarily judge not only that “This *F* is beautiful” – for example, “This Haydn sonata is beautiful” or “This Pollock is beautiful” – but also judge that “This *F* is beautiful but that one is not” – for example, “This Haydn sonata is beautiful but that one is not” or “This Pollock is beautiful but that one is not.” We could not make such judgments, although we surely do, unless our aesthetic judgments were compatible with our ordinary classificatory judgments, and gave expression to the way in which some objects but not others occasion a free play of imagination and understanding that goes beyond the relation between them that is required for ordinary cognition.

Now I cannot claim that there are any passages in Kant that unequivocally imply the metacognitive rather than precognitive and multicognitive approaches; if there were, then presumably the latter approaches would not have enjoyed such a good run for their money. But there are certainly passages that are compatible with the metacognitive approach, and some that at least suggest it. Both kinds of passages may be found in Section VIII of the First Introduction, Kant’s central discussion of aesthetic judgment

in that text.⁴⁵ When Kant writes that “An aesthetic judgment in general can therefore be explicated as that judgment whose predicate can never be cognition (concept of an object) (although it may contain the subjective conditions for a cognition in general). In such a judgment the determining ground is sensation” (*FI*, VIII, 20:224), he does not actually say that an aesthetic judgment is incompatible with ordinary cognition of its object: The *predicate* of the judgment that can never be cognition or a concept of the object is, after all, the predicate ‘beautiful,’ and it is the application of *this* predicate that can have only sensation as its determining ground; and this at least leaves open that the *subject* of the aesthetic judgment can be identified only by means of an ordinary determinate concept. If that is so, then the occurrence of the sensation of pleasure that is the basis of the application of the predicate ‘beautiful’ would have to be compatible with the recognition of the satisfaction of the determinate conditions necessary for the application of the subject concept of the judgment, such as, *painting* or *sonata in three movements*, and the feeling of pleasure would thus naturally be understood as the feeling of a degree or type of harmony between the cognitive faculties that goes beyond whatever is necessary to satisfy the concept. We could say the same about Kant’s subsequent statement that “since a merely subjective condition of a judgment does not permit a determinate concept of that judgment’s determining ground, this can only be given in the feeling of pleasure, so that the aesthetic judgment is always a judgment of reflection” (*FI*, VIII, 20:225): This can be taken to say only that the determining ground for the *predicate* of the aesthetic judgment, namely ‘beautiful,’ cannot be a determinate concept.

Perhaps one could also find more positive evidence for the metacognitive approach in this passage from the preceding page in the First Introduction:

By the designation “an aesthetic judgment about an object” it is therefore immediately indicated that a given representation is certainly related to an object but that what is understood in the judgment is not the determination of the object but of the subject and its feeling. For in the power of judgment understanding and imagination are considered in relation to each other, and this can, to be sure, first be considered objectively, as belonging to cognition (as happened in the transcendental schematism of the power of judgment); but one can also

⁴⁵ It should be recalled that the two locutions in the first Introduction in support of the multicognitive approach come in the preceding section (*FI*, VII, 20:220–1), prior to the main discussion.

consider this relation of two faculties of cognition merely subjectively, insofar as one helps or hinders the other in the very same representation and thereby affects the *state of mind*, and [is] therefore a relation which is *sensitive* (which is not the case in the separate [*abgesonderten*] use of any other faculty of cognition). (*FL*, VIII, 20:223)

The first sentence of this passage clearly implies that an aesthetic judgment is made about a particular object, and must therefore be compatible with the recognition that the object satisfies the conditions for membership in some determinate kind, but that the *predicate* of the aesthetic judgment – “what is understood in the judgment” – cannot be based on this determinate concept, and must instead be based on a relation between the cognitive powers that in some way goes beyond it. In the second sentence, Kant says that the relation between imagination and understanding can *first* be considered “objectively” and then *also* considered subjectively, “insofar as one helps or hinders the other *in the very same representation*” (emphasis added): Perhaps this is intended to indicate that in an aesthetic judgment we are conscious of both the object’s satisfaction of the ordinary conditions for cognition and also of some way in which our experience of it goes beyond those conditions. And in the final clause I have quoted, Kant does not say that the aesthetic use of judgment is a use separate from every other faculty of cognition, but only that the sensitive relation that is the basis of the aesthetic judgment is not found in the separate use of any *other* faculty of cognition, that is, in any other kind of judgment. Thus he might be taken to say that the aesthetic response to the beauty of an object is not completely separate from the ordinary cognition of it but rather in some sense additional to it.

Kant’s initial description of the basis for aesthetic judgment in the published Introduction (VII, 5:189–90), as earlier shown, provides some of the best evidence for the precognitive approach to the harmony of the faculties. But even here Kant does follow his statement that the pleasure in the experience of beauty “is connected with the mere apprehension (*apprehensio*) of the form of an object of intuition without a relation of this to a concept for a determinate cognition” with the gloss that “Such a judgment is an aesthetic judgment on the purposiveness of the object, which is not grounded on any available concept of the object and does not furnish one” (5:190), and this at least suggests that there *are* concepts available for the object and that the experience of its beauty must be compatible with the availability of those concepts. Perhaps a more conclusive textual basis for the metacognitive approach could be found, however,

in this passage from Kant's concluding comment on the *Analytic of the Beautiful* rather than anywhere in the introduction to the *Analytic*:

But if in the judgment of taste the imagination must be considered in its freedom, then it is in the first instance taken not as reproductive, as subjected to the laws of association, but as productive and self-active (as the authoress of voluntary forms of possible intuitions); and although in the apprehension of a given object of the senses it is of course bound to a determinate form of this object and to this extent has no free play (as in invention), nevertheless it is still quite conceivable that the object can provide it with a form that contains precisely such a composition of the manifold as the imagination would design in harmony with the *lawfulness of the understanding* in general if it were left free by itself. (*CPJ*, General Remark following §22, 5:241)

Here Kant suggests that in the perception of a beautiful object, at least one that is already extant as opposed to first being invented, the imagination *is* bound to a determinate form for that object, presumably that required by the concept used to identify and classify it, but that *at the same time* the imagination feels as if it has had the freedom to invent forms going beyond this determinate form, but forms that at the same time still satisfy in some way the general requirement of lawfulness stemming from the understanding. A natural way to comprehend all this is precisely to understand a beautiful object as inducing a play among the cognitive powers that feels as if it satisfies the understanding's general requirement for unity and coherence in a way that goes beyond what is required to satisfy the conditions for the application of a determinate concept to the object.

Still, I think it must be conceded that the best argument for the metacognitive approach is not that some passage in Kant's text unequivocally and conclusively implies it, but that it is the only way to make sense of all of Kant's assumptions. Like anyone, Kant assumes that the object of an aesthetic judgment is always identified by means of a determinate concept; and furthermore, his own theory of apperception requires that the object of any sort of judgment be picked out by a determinate concept. Kant also assumes that pleasure must be connected with the satisfaction of some underlying objective, and further, that if judgments of taste are to be universally valid, the pleasure that they express must be connected to the intersubjectively valid powers of cognition. So the pleasure expressed by a judgment of taste must be connected to the satisfaction of our underlying objective in cognition, namely, the unification of our manifolds of intuition. But if the pleasure in beauty is to be noticeable and the imagination is to be free, this satisfaction of the underlying objective of cognition

must be in some way unexpected and not determined by any rule. The only way to put all these assumptions together is to suppose that in the experience of beauty in an object, we recognize that the ordinary conditions for cognition of such an object are satisfied but also feel⁴⁶ that our experience of the manifold presented by the object satisfies our demand for unity in a way that goes beyond whatever is necessary for the satisfaction of those ordinary conditions.

8. Once we have accepted this conclusion, however, we can see that the precognitive and multicognitive approaches to the harmony of the faculties can in the end be taken to characterize specific ways in which our experiences of unity and coherence in the manifold presented to us by particular objects can go beyond the conditions necessary for ordinary cognition – although it should be implied precisely by the fact that the harmony of the faculties must be a free play that there can be no single, concrete description of this state, so that these approaches cannot be more than abstract descriptions of some ways in which objects might yield a metacognitive harmony. The grain of truth in the precognitive approach is simply that the most general way to describe the manner in which our experience of a beautiful object goes beyond the necessary conditions for ordinary cognition is by saying that in addition to satisfying those conditions, which consist in a manifold's display of the properties required by the predicates in a determinate concept (such as displaying three intersecting straight lines, as required by the concept *triangle*; or being a slightly concave, more or less circular piece of fairly rigid and fairly nonabsorbent material, as required by the concept *plate*; or being an intentionally designed and colored array of pigment on a wood panel or canvas, as required by the concept *painting*), the experience *also* seems to satisfy the understanding's general requirement of unity and coherence in some further way, which is not specified by such determinate concepts and is not manifest in the experience of every object that does satisfy such concepts. A beautiful plate satisfies the necessary conditions for the application of the concept *plate* in the same way that an indifferent or

⁴⁶ I say "feel" here both because it is Kant's theory that we recognize the existence of the harmony of the faculties precisely through the feeling of pleasure this state causes (see *CPJ*, §9, 5:219) and also because one presumably does not have to be aware of Kant's theoretical explanation of that pleasure to feel it or even to judge the object to be beautiful. But presumably one does have to recognize in at least some rough-and-ready way that the object satisfies the conditions for its subsumption under the determinate concept by means of which it is individuated and referred to – one does not just feel that a certain object is a hummingbird or a sonata.

downright ugly plate does, but the relations among the precise features of its shape, material, decoration, and so on provide a further gratification for the understanding's interest in coherence that is not specified by any further determinate concept and cannot be captured by one. Ordinary or ugly plates do not provide this further gratification for the understanding apart from their satisfaction of the determinate concept *plate*. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same goes for beautiful and ordinary paintings.

The multicognitive interpretation, by contrast, can be seen as describing a particular way in which *some* beautiful objects go beyond satisfying the necessary conditions for subsumption under the determinate concepts by means of which they are individuated and recognized, namely, by prompting a free yet harmonious play among images and thoughts they may suggest, a free play that itself seems to satisfy the understanding's demand for coherence but that is not dictated by any determinate concepts of the objects and cannot generate any such determinate concept. For example, a successful novel may suggest a host of thoughts about character, virtues, vices, choice and chance, and so on, that are not required simply for the work to count as a novel, and that are not dictated by any further particular rule, such as for novels of a particular period or genre, yet that nevertheless seem to stimulate the imagination in their variety and yet satisfy the understanding in their coherence. We enjoy freedom in a play of concepts that goes beyond the minimum organization required for classification of our object, and, we enjoy such play only when it does not degenerate into chaos; so we can describe what we enjoy as a play of concepts that nevertheless satisfies the understanding's general requirement of unity.

It is important to note here, however, that there is no need, arising either from Kant's theory of the harmony of the faculties or from our own experience, to suppose that *every* beautiful object must satisfy the requirement of an indeterminate but coherent play of imagination through an indeterminate but coherent play of concepts or "conceptual possibilities." Some types of art, such as various forms of literature, some representational painting and sculpture, some music with words, and so on, surely suggest a variety of ideas and thoughts to us, and what we enjoy in them will no doubt be an indeterminate yet coherent play among such thoughts. In other cases, however – for example, some forms of architecture, nonrepresentational painting and sculpture, some music without words, and so on – it would seem most plausible to say that what we enjoy is a free yet coherent play not among concepts but among perceptual forms, between shape and color, between light and shade, among tones,

between melody and harmony, and so on – or also between forms and concepts. It would be forced and misleading to identify all those with concepts or conceptual possibilities. After all, Kant is thinking of a free play of the imagination that nevertheless satisfies the understanding's demand for lawfulness, and the Latinate word 'imagination' as well as the German '*Einbildungskraft*' connotes above all a play with *images* or *Bilder* – in Kantian terms, with intuitions rather than with concepts. It would seem to be a reasonable accommodation between Kant's theory and our experience to say that *sometimes* it is with more conceptual thoughts or ideas that the imagination plays, but an entirely unreasonable interpretation of Kant's theory as well as of our own aesthetic experience to insist that the imagination *always* plays with concepts rather than intuitions.

9. Finally, I would argue that only the metacognitive interpretation of the harmony of the faculties can make sense without paradox of Kant's recognition of adherent beauty and artistic beauty. Kant describes "free beauty" as that which is judged "according to mere form" and without a "concept of any end for which the manifold should serve the given object," while "adherent beauty," such as "the beauty of a human being (and in this species that of a man, a woman, or a child), the beauty of a horse, of a building (such as a church, a palace, an arsenal, or a garden-house) presuppose[s] a concept of the end that determines what the thing should be, hence a concept of its perfection" (*CPJ*, §16, 229–30). Yet he does not deny that adherent beauty is a kind of beauty at all, as he should say if all experience of beauty had to be independent of concepts altogether, nor does he say that we must ignore an object's actual or intended purpose in order to respond to its adherent beauty. We would have to abstract from an object's purpose, if we can, to judge it as a free beauty, but this is not to say that we have to abstract from its purpose to judge it as having any sort of beauty at all (5:231). But how can a response that presupposes a concept of the purpose that an object is supposed to serve, and therefore the conditions that it needs to satisfy in order to serve that purpose, be a response to beauty at all? On the metacognitive approach, this is not a puzzle: An object that we experience as having adherent beauty would be one that we experience as satisfying the conditions required by the determinate concept of its purpose, just as we recognize any beautiful object as satisfying some determinate concept, though not necessarily a concept of a purpose, but also as having a degree or kind of unity that goes beyond anything required by that concept of purpose, and thus as inducing a free play of imagination and understanding in addition to the satisfaction of the former conditions.

There are in fact several ways in which this could be the case, each of which is suggested by particular turns of phrase in Kant's discussion of adherent beauty. In some cases, the object's intended purpose may simply restrict permissible forms for it, and we may not take any especially noticeable pleasure in its suitability for this purpose, instead taking our pleasure primarily in ways in which it goes beyond what is necessary for that suitability, although were the object unsuitable for its purpose, our displeasure at that might block the possibility of any pleasure in it at all; in such cases, as Kant says, the imagination "would merely be restricted" by the purpose of the object, so that, for example, "One would be able to add much to a building that would be pleasing in the intuition of it if only it were not supposed to be a church." In other cases, we might take as it were independent pleasures in the object's suitability for its purpose and in the free play it nevertheless affords our cognitive powers, so that our complete response to it is as it were a sum of two pleasures. In such cases we would enjoy "the combination of the good . . . with beauty," and "the *entire faculty* of the powers of representation" would gain "if both states of mind are in agreement" (230–1). In yet other cases, we might enjoy what we take to be an unusual degree of coherence *between* the purpose of the object and aspects of its appearance not directly dictated by its purpose.⁴⁷ But in each of these cases, we would clearly be enjoying some free play of imagination and understanding that goes beyond the object's satisfaction of the determinate conditions imposed by the concept of its purpose, whether that play is simply one that takes place *within* the bounds set by the purpose of the object or is a play *between* the purpose and the form of the object.

Kant also makes beauty in fine art seem paradoxical when he states that "In a product of art one must be aware that it is art, and not nature; yet the purposiveness of its form must still seem to be as free from all constraint by arbitrary rules as if it were a mere product of nature . . . art can only be called beautiful if we are aware that it is art and yet it looks to us like nature" (*CPJ*, §45, 5:306). The chief difference between art and nature, as Kant has just maintained, is that art is "production through freedom, i.e., through a capacity for choice that grounds its actions in reason" (*CPJ*, §43, 5:303), thus something produced intentionally and with a purpose in mind. Kant then seems to be saying that we must recognize a work of

⁴⁷ I have discussed these possibilities and the textual basis for them more fully in Guyer (2002b).

art as a product of intention and yet be able to ignore or abstract the intended purpose of its production – to see it as if were mere nature – in order to respond to its beauty. But there is no need for him to require us to perform any such mental gymnastics, for as he goes on to argue, a truly successful work of art is a product of genius, and genius is nothing but the “talent” or “natural gift” that allows the artist to *go beyond* the “rules which first lay the foundation by means of which a product that is to be called artistic is first represented as possible” (*CPJ*, §46, 5:307). In other words, a work of art is always produced with a variety of ends and rules in mind – the specific point the artist may have in producing that work, the rules that follow from the medium and genre within which she intends to work, perhaps the constraints that follow from the larger economic and political objectives she may have, and so on – but those rules are never *sufficient* to determine the character of a truly successful work, because its success depends precisely on our experience, prompted by the genius of the artist, of a free play of our cognitive powers, which must be compatible but also go beyond the satisfaction of all such rules and constraints. Thus, while “if the object is given as a product of art, and is as such supposed to be declared to be beautiful, then, since art always presupposes an end in the cause (and its causality), a concept must *first* be the ground of what the thing is supposed to be” (*CPJ*, §48, 5:311; emphasis added), yet if it is in fact to be beautiful, *then* “the unsought and unintentional subjective purposiveness of the free correspondence of the imagination to the lawfulness of the understanding presupposes a proportion and disposition of this faculty that cannot be produced by any following of rules . . . but that only the nature of the subject can produce” (*CPJ*, §49, 5:317–18). The metacognitive approach to the harmony of the faculties allows us to reconcile these two requirements without difficulty: A beautiful work of art must first satisfy the conditions imposed by the various intentions embodied in it, but must also produce a free play of imagination and understanding going beyond the mere satisfaction of all those constraints.

Now Kant also proposes that artistic genius is always manifested in the “presentation of *aesthetic ideas*,” where an “aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking thought without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., *concept*, to be adequate to it” (*CPJ*, §49, 5:314). An aesthetic idea seems to be a central conception for a work of art that connotes a “rational idea,” that is, a central intellectual and in fact typically moral content, on the one

hand, through an indeterminate wealth of “thoughts” or attributes, on the other.⁴⁸ The conception of aesthetic ideas could easily suggest the multicognitive approach to the harmony of the faculties. But two points should be clear. First, while Kant’s conception no doubt captures something that is central to our experience of many works of art, he gives no reason to suppose that *every* work of art has a theme, let alone a moral theme, that is realized through a free play of further thoughts; his own earlier examples of art in the *Analytic of the Beautiful* clearly implied that in at least some cases of genuinely beautiful art we respond to form alone. (And he certainly gives no argument for his claim two sections later that *all* beauty, the beauty of nature as well as of art, involves the expression of aesthetic ideas [*CPJ*, §51, 5:320]). But second, and more important for my argument here, it should be clear that even where a work of art does give us the experience of beauty through an aesthetic idea, the analysis of art and genius that has preceded Kant’s introduction of the concept of aesthetic ideas clearly entails that we must experience such a work of art as both satisfying a variety of determinate rules, necessary for it to be a product of intentional activity and to be the kind of object that it is, and *also* as generating a free play of imagination and understanding, in this case a play between the theme of the work and the variety of images and thoughts by which it is realized, that goes beyond anything dictated by all those rules. In other words, Kant’s theory of aesthetic ideas, whether we take it, as he intended, as an account of all works of artistic genius or rather, as seems more reasonable, as an account of some, requires the metacognitive rather than the multicognitive approach to the harmony of the faculties.

10. In conclusion, then, I have argued that although there is certainly textual evidence for both the precognitive and multicognitive approaches to the interpretation of the harmony of the faculties, and indeed little unequivocal textual evidence for what I have called the metacognitive approach, only the latter approach is consistent with Kant’s epistemology, with his and our assumptions about the grammatical form of aesthetic judgments, and with his own recognition of adherent beauty and artistic beauty as genuine and ultimately paradigmatic forms of beauty; moreover, the germs of truth in the precognitive and multicognitive approaches can be incorporated into the metacognitive interpretation as characterizations of some of the ways in which the play of imagination in aesthetic

⁴⁸ For a fuller account, see my 1994, reprinted as chapter 12 in the second revised edition of *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Guyer 1997a).

experience can go beyond the satisfaction of the requirements of ordinary concepts, and thus of the ordinary conditions of cognition – but since the very concept of the harmony of the faculties as the explanation of our pleasure in beauty requires that our experience of beauty not be constrained by any determinate rules, such characterizations can never offer anything more than some examples of the ways in which our experience of beauty can go beyond the determinate requirements of cognition.

Kant's Leading Thread in the Analytic of the Beautiful

Béatrice Longuenesse

Kant conducts his Analytic of the Beautiful, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, according to the “leading thread” that also guided the table of the categories in the first *Critique*: the four titles of the logical functions of judgement. This leading thread, which has not met with much favor on the part of Kant's readers where the first *Critique* is concerned, is even less popular in the case of the third *Critique*. In this essay, I will argue that this ill repute is unmerited. In fact, Kant's use of the leading thread of the logical functions of judgment to analyze judgments of taste merits close attention. In particular, it brings to light a striking feature of judgments of taste as analyzed by Kant. We would expect the main headings in the table of logical functions (quantity, quality, relation, modality) to guide the analysis of aesthetic judgments as judgments about an *object* (“this rose is beautiful,” “this painting is beautiful”). Now they certainly do serve this purpose. But in addition, it turns out that they also serve to analyze another judgment, one that remains implicitly contained within the *predicate* (‘beautiful’) of the judgments of taste. This second judgment, embedded, as it were, in the first (or in the predicate of the first), and that only the critique of taste brings to discursive clarity, is a judgment no longer about the *object*, but about the *judging subjects*, namely, the subjects that pass the judgment: “this rose is beautiful,” “this painting is beautiful,” and so on.

In this essay, I will be concerned with the striking shift of direction in Kant's analysis of judgments of taste, from an analysis of the explicit judgement about an object to an analysis of the implicit judgment about the judging subjects. I propose, moreover, to show that when we reach the fourth moment of the Analytic of judgments of taste – that of

modality – the systematic investigation of these judgments according to the “leading thread” of the logical functions laid out in the first *Critique* uniquely illuminates the relationship between the normative and the descriptive aspects of aesthetic judgments. As always with Kant, architectonic considerations thus play an essential role in the unfolding of the substantive argument.

I now start with the first title or “moment,” that of quality.

1. THE PREDICATE OF THE JUDGMENT OF TASTE: THE EXPRESSION OF A DISINTERESTED PLEASURE

I must first forestall a possible objection to the method just propounded. Given the differences Kant emphasizes between aesthetic judgments and the cognitive judgments of the first *Critique*, how can the leading thread of the logical forms of judgment at work in the first *Critique* be the slightest bit enlightening for our understanding of Kant's *Analytic of the Beautiful*? In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the table of the logical functions of judgment was presented as the systematic inventory of the functions of thought necessarily at work in any analysis of what is given to our sensibility, insofar as that analysis is geared toward subsuming individual representations (intuitions) under general representations (concepts). Because the logical forms of judgments were forms in accordance with which we *analyze* the sensible given into concepts, it was also supposed to be a key to those forms of *synthesis* of sensible manifolds that make possible their *analysis* into concepts. As such, the table of logical functions of judgment was also the leading thread for the establishment of a table of *universal concepts of synthesis* prior to analysis: the categories.¹ But Kant is adamant that judgments of taste are *not* cognitive judgments, and that *as* aesthetic judgments, they do not rest on categories. This being so, in what way might the argument of the first *Critique*, to the effect that the table of logical forms of judgment can function as a leading thread for a table of categories, have any consequence whatsoever for understanding the nature of judgments of taste?

One preliminary answer is that following once again the leading thread of the elementary logical functions serves at least to establish a checklist of questions concerning the nature of the acts of judging at work in

¹ Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A70/B85–A85/B109. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* will be given, as is usual, in the pagination of the original editions of the first (1781) and second (1787) editions, indicated by A and B.

aesthetic judgments: Investigating the manifest form of judgments of taste according to the four headings established in the first *Critique* is investigating the function of judging, *Funktion zu urteilen*, manifest in this form. Just as in the first *Critique*, all we have here is indeed a mere leading thread: Investigating the logical *form* of an aesthetic judgment should give us an invaluable tool for understanding a *content* that cannot, of course, be reduced to that logical form. In aesthetic judgments, however, the content thus illuminated is not the content of the categories. Rather, the content brought to light by the Analytic conducted in accordance with the logical functions of judgment is that of the predicate of the judgment of taste: the predicate 'beautiful'. In other words, to analyze, using the leading thread of logical functions of judgment, the *act* of judging the beautiful is also to elucidate the meaning of the *predicate* 'beautiful' in the propositions resulting from that act.

This is precisely why the first moment in the Analytic of the Beautiful is that of quality. As all commentators have noted, the order of exposition here differs from that of the table of judgments in the first *Critique*, where Kant started with quantity. This is because, in a way, the whole analysis of aesthetic judgment boils down to the question: what is the meaning of the *predicate* of the judgment of taste (the predicate 'beautiful'), that is, *what*, if anything, is *asserted of the object* (the logical subject of the judgment "this *X* is beautiful") in an aesthetic judgment? Consequently, when we consider aesthetic judgments under the title of quality, we are not merely considering their *form*. As to quality, the form of the aesthetic judgments Kant is most directly concerned with (e.g., "this rose is beautiful") is affirmative, and there is no particular difficulty about that.² But the interesting question is: *What* is thus being affirmed? What is the content of the predicate 'beautiful' that is asserted of an object in aesthetic judgments?

Kant's answer: The predicate 'beautiful' does not express a reality – namely, the positive determination of a thing, known through our senses.³

² This is not to say that there cannot be *negative* judgments of taste ("this *X* is not beautiful") or even, more interestingly, judgments of taste whose predicate is the opposite of 'beautiful' (e.g., 'ugly'). All I mean to say here is that whatever the form of the judgment is as to its quality, Kant's main concern in the first moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful is to take this form only as a starting point to investigate the content of the predicate asserted (or, as the case may be, negated) in the judgment of taste. The most typical case of aesthetic judgment of taste, and that on which Kant focuses his attention, is that where the judgment is affirmative and asserts of an object that it is beautiful. For a possible interpretation of the predicate 'ugly', see Longuenesse (2003).

³ Cf. the explanation of 'reality', the first of the three categories of quality, corresponding to the form of affirmative judgment, in the first *Critique*. A80/B106, A183/B182.

Rather, it expresses a feeling of pleasure brought about in the judging subject by his own mental activity in apprehending the object. This pleasure, albeit occasioned by the object, is elicited more directly by the receptivity of the judging subject to her own activity. This is why Kant describes the aesthetic pleasure as “disinterested.” An “interest,” he says, is a satisfaction that attaches to the representation of the existence of an object.⁴ To say that aesthetic pleasure is disinterested is not to say that the object doesn't need to exist for the pleasure to be elicited. Rather, it is to say that the object's existence is not what causes our pleasure; nor does our faculty of desire strive to cause the existence of the object. Instead, the object's existence is only the occasion for the pleasure, which is elicited by what Kant calls the “free play of the imagination and the understanding” in apprehending the object.

The pleasure we are talking about here is therefore of a peculiar nature. In §1 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant characterizes pleasure – and displeasure – as a “feeling of life” (*Lebensgefühl*) of the subject (§1, 204). Similarly, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* he writes:

Pleasure is the representation of the agreement of the object or the action *with the subjective conditions of life*, i.e. with the faculty of the causality of a representation with respect to the actual existence (*Wirklichkeit*) of its object (or with respect to the determination of the powers of the subject to action in order to produce the object).⁵

Now, to relate the feeling of pleasure to the “causality of a representation with respect to the actual existence of its object” is to relate it to the faculty of desire. For the latter is defined, in the same footnote of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, as “a being's faculty to be by means of his representations the cause of the actual existence of the object of these representations.” What Kant calls the “subjective conditions of life” are thus none other than the conditions under which the faculty of desire becomes active in striving to generate its objects. And the pleasure we take

⁴ *Critique the Power of Judgment* (henceforth *CPJ*), §2, AA V 205. References to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* are given in the pagination of volume V of the Akademie edition of Kant's collected works, indicated here by AA. Henceforth those references will be given directly in the main text, with indications of section (e.g., §6) and page. For citations in English I have used the Guyer and Matthews translation (2000). The pages of the Akademie Ausgabe appear on the margins of the English text. I have occasionally altered the translation.

⁵ *Critique of Practical Reason*, AA V, 9n., my emphasis. These page references from the Akademie Ausgabe can be found in the margins of Mary Gregor's translation of the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1997b). I have slightly modified Gregor's translation.

in an object is the representation of the agreement of that object with the faculty of desire.⁶

Defined in this way, pleasure is certainly not “disinterested” since it is linked, by its very definition, to the faculty of desire. However, in the First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant extends his definition of pleasure. He includes under the concept of pleasure a feeling that is not directly linked to the “causality of the representation with respect to the actual existence of its object.” His definition of pleasure is now the following:

Pleasure is a *state* of the mind in which a representation is in agreement with itself, as a ground, either merely for preserving this state itself (for the state of the powers of the mind reciprocally promoting each other in a representation preserves itself) or for producing its object.⁷

The second kind of pleasure mentioned in this text (“*Pleasure* is a *state* of the mind in which a representation is in agreement with itself, as the ground . . . for producing its object”) is the same as the kind described in the *Critique of Practical Reason* quoted earlier. But the first kind is different: It is the consciousness of a state that tends to nothing more than to preserve itself. This is the disinterested pleasure proper to the judgment of taste.

We find it described again in §10, where the definition of pleasure includes no reference at all to the *interested* pleasure that was the focus of the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Kant now writes:

The consciousness of the causality of a representation for *maintaining* the subject in its state, can here designate in general what is called pleasure; in contrast to

⁶ When Kant, in the passage from the *Critique of Practical Reason* referenced in footnote 5, describes the faculty of desire as the “subjective condition of life,” we need to remember that for him, life is a capacity (*Vermögen*) of a material thing to produce itself, or to be cause and effect of itself. At least this is how our power of judgment, in its reflective use, allows us to represent living things or organisms. See *CPJ* §65–6, AAV 372–7. In living beings that are also conscious and self-moving (animals), the faculty of desire is a “subjective condition of life” since the “capacity to be by one’s representation the cause of the existence of the object of one’s representation” allows the living being to act with a purpose in ensuring its own production and reproduction. We understand, then, how pleasure can be described as a *Lebensgefühl* when it is the feeling of the agreement of the object with the subjective condition of life, or faculty of desire. However, in introducing the distinctive kind of pleasure that is the *aesthetic* pleasure, where the pleasure has *no* relation to the faculty of desire or is disinterested, Kant makes clear that pleasure as the *Lebensgefühl* is not necessarily connected with the faculty of desire defined as the ‘subjective condition of life’ in the way just explained. I say more about this disconcerting point shortly.

⁷ *CPJ*, First Introduction, AA XX 231. Emphases are Kant’s.

which displeasure is that representation that contains the ground (*den Grund*) for determining the state of the representations to pass into its opposite (by repelling or eliminating those representations). (§10, 120)

This is the first of the two kinds of pleasure described in the First Introduction: a pleasure that does not relate to a faculty of desire directed toward obtaining its object, but instead is the mere consciousness of the effort of the mind to conserve its present state.⁸

But then, what remains of the idea that pleasure is the “consciousness of the relationship of the representation to the subjective conditions of life”? And what about pleasure as a “feeling of life”? One proposal might be that in the case of aesthetic pleasure, the “life” in question is different from the biological life whose subjective conditions are, for nonrational creatures just as much as for rational creatures, the conditions under which the faculty of desire becomes active in striving to produce and obtain its object. The life whose consciousness is aesthetic pleasure might be the life of what Hegel will later call “spirit”: the life of the universal community of human minds.⁹

Here two objections may readily present themselves. First, one might object that I am extending Kant's notion of life beyond recognition by trying to suggest a move from the biological life, to which interested pleasure (the pleasure of sensation) is clearly connected, to a hypothetical “life of the spirit” to which disinterested pleasure (the pleasure of taste) might be connected. Does this second notion of life have more than metaphorical meaning? Second, one might object that I am moving even further from any recognizable Kantian doctrine when I suggest a comparison between this ‘life of the spirit’ of dubious Kantian pedigree and Hegel's notion of spirit.

In response, I shall first note that Kant does grant that all pleasure or displeasure is the feeling of a living entity in the biological sense: a conscious corporeal being.¹⁰ Nevertheless, he adds, if all pleasure were

⁸ Note that Kant's conception of pleasure is strikingly active. Both kinds of pleasure are characterized by a specific effort or striving: either an effort to produce (or reproduce) the object whose representation is accompanied by the feeling of pleasure or the effort to remain in the state in which the mind affects itself, through its own activity, with a feeling of pleasure.

⁹ For this notion of spirit, see for instance Hegel (1977), 110 (“‘I’ that is ‘We’ and ‘We’ that is ‘I’”). Of course, the grounds on which this ‘We’ is established in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* are very different from those I am exploring here in connection with Kant's *Analytic of the Beautiful*.

¹⁰ See Kant's discussion of Burke's views at the end of the *Analytic of the Sublime*, AAV 129.

grounded on attraction or emotion, then there would be no justification for demanding of others an agreement with our own pleasure. So there has to be an *a priori* ground to the peculiar kind of pleasure that is the aesthetic pleasure of reflection. This *a priori* ground, as we shall see shortly, is a peculiar feature of the very functioning of our mind, or representational capacities. So far, all we know is that by virtue of this pleasure, the mind tends to nothing more, and nothing less, than to *maintain itself in its own state*. Now, being the cause and effect of oneself is precisely Kant's characterization of life as a capacity of corporeal things.¹¹ It thus seems quite apt to say that in aesthetic pleasure, the mind is cause and effect of *nothing but itself*, and so aesthetic pleasure is *Lebensgefühl* in this restricted sense: feeling of the life *of the mind* (of the representational capacities). Nevertheless, the term 'life' has *at the same time* its most usual sense (the capacity of a corporeal being to be cause and effect of its own activity), since there would be no feeling of pleasure unless the representational capacities were those of a living thing in the ordinary sense of the term.

I added that this life of the mind is also the 'life of the spirit', that is, the life of a universal community of judging subjects. With this suggestion, I in fact anticipated a point that finds its initial expression only in the second moment of Kant's analytic of the judgment of taste: What it is *about* the state of the mind that elicits the peculiar kind of pleasure that is aesthetic pleasure is *the very fact that it is universally communicable, or makes a claim to the possibility of being shared by all human beings*. I thus suggest that the aesthetic pleasure, according to Kant, is a *Lebensgefühl* in the additional sense that it is a feeling of the life (the capacity to be the cause and effect of itself) of an *a priori* grounded community of judging subjects (a community grounded in the *a priori* representational capacities shared by all judging subjects, considered simply as such).

To recapitulate: In the first moment of his *Analytic of the Beautiful*, Kant asks: *what is affirmed of the logical subject of the judgment* in the simple case of an affirmative judgment of taste such as "this X is beautiful"? His answer: What is affirmed is a feeling of disinterested pleasure elicited in us when we apprehend the object. I have suggested that this pleasure does meet Kant's generic definition of pleasure (pleasure is a "feeling of life") if one accepts that in this particular case "the feeling of life" is dissociated from the "subjective condition of life," which

¹¹ On this point, see footnote 6.

is the faculty of desire, and instead is the feeling elicited by the life *of the spirit*. Here I anticipated the second moment of the Analytic in suggesting that we understand 'spirit' as the a priori community of judging subjects, grounded in the universal a priori forms of their mental activity.

Let me now submit this last point to scrutiny by turning to the second moment, that of "quantity" in Kant's Analytic of the Beautiful.

2. THE "SUBJECTIVE UNIVERSALITY" OF JUDGMENTS OF TASTE

Judgments of taste, as judgments about an object, are always singular. Of course, 'beautiful' can also be the predicate of particular judgments ("some human beings are beautiful") or even universal judgments ("all roses in bloom are beautiful"). But in such cases, Kant maintains, the judgment is no longer "aesthetic" but "logical": It is a combination of *concepts*, expressing an inductive generalization from experience, not a present feeling in connection with a singular object of intuition. The predicate 'beautiful', in such "logical" judgments, is a general concept expressing a property common to the objects referred to by the logical subject of the judgment. This common property was explained in the first moment: The objects said to be beautiful have in common that apprehending them is the occasion of a disinterested pleasure for the apprehending subject. But the predicate of an *aesthetic* judgment (e.g., the judgment "this rose is beautiful") expresses a pleasure that is *felt at this moment* upon apprehending *this* object. So the aesthetic judgment can only be singular (§8, 215).

Now Kant claims that because the pleasure is disinterested, the judgment is determined as to its quantity in another respect: The satisfaction felt in this particular case *by me* ought to be felt *by all other judging subjects* who might find themselves apprehending the same object. If, as a judgment about the object, the judgment is singular, its predicate contains an implicit universal judgment, one that says of "the whole sphere of those who judge" (*ibid.*) that they ought to agree with my judgment, that is, they ought to attribute the predicate beautiful to the object of my judgment. Thus one might perhaps develop the judgment "this object is beautiful" in the following way: "This object is such that apprehending it elicits in me a pleasure such that all judging subjects, in apprehending this same object, ought to experience the same pleasure and agree with my judgment."

Kant does not explicitly articulate this development of the predicate of aesthetic judgments. I suggest that it is nonetheless justified by what he does say. He writes:

[...] The aesthetic universality that is ascribed to a judgment must also be of a special kind; for although it does not connect the predicate of beauty with the concept of the *object*, considered in its whole logical sphere, yet it extends that predicate over the whole sphere *of those who judge* [*über die ganze Sphäre der Urteilenden*; emphasis Kant's]. (Ibid. translation modified)

This “extension (of the predicate ‘beautiful’) over the whole sphere of those who judge” is expressed in the developed version of the judgment proposed earlier: “... all judging subjects, in apprehending this same object, ought to feel the same pleasure and agree with my judgment.”

Kant offers two arguments in support of the thesis that the predicate ‘beautiful’ extends over the whole sphere of those who judge. The first is put forward in §6: Since the feeling occasioned by the object judged to be beautiful is disinterested (this was established in the first moment), it does not depend on the particular physiological or psychological characteristics of this or that judging subject (as would be the case for the feeling expressed by the predicate ‘pleasant’). It ought therefore to be shared by any judging subject, simply by virtue of the fact of being a judging subject, namely, of having a judging subject’s representational capacities.

This is a bad argument: After all, even while being disinterested in Kant’s sense, the satisfaction drawn from the apprehension of the object might depend on mental characteristics peculiar to some but not all subjects. Isn’t this what happens in playful activities, where individuals may differ greatly as to the kinds of games they may derive pleasure from (chess, backgammon, charades, or what have you)? This being so, the disinterested character of the pleasure (the fact that it is elicited by the mental activity of the subject rather than by the existence of this or that object) does not by itself seem to be a sufficient argument for maintaining that it is universally communicable.

Of course, the aesthetic pleasure is of a different nature, since it is supposed to be a pleasure we take in our mental activity *in apprehending an object*, whereas in the cases I mentioned, we take pleasure in our own mental activity without the mediation of any contemplation at all. Moreover, a game is bound by rules, whereas aesthetic experience transcends all rules. So I am not saying that the two cases are exactly the same. The only point I want to make here is that the fact that the pleasure is elicited *by*

the mental activity itself and is, in this sense, disinterested is not a sufficient ground for making it universalizable.

Another objection to the counterexample I am proposing might be that the playful activities I cite are not disinterested at all: A major part of the pleasure we derive from engaging in such activities is the pleasure of winning (or the pleasure of striving to win), where we strive to cause a state of affairs in the world (asserting our superiority over our opponent, obtaining authority over her, and so on). But supposing that this is true (and it is not true in all cases: what about charades, or a game of solitaire?), all it shows is that the pleasure we take in playing is not *purely* disinterested: Other pleasures are mixed with the pleasure of exercising our mental capacities. But this is also true of the aesthetic pleasure of reflection Kant is concerned with. To admit that the disinterested pleasure we take in the play of our own mental capacities is mixed with interested pleasures does not by itself amount to a denial that there *is* a measure of disinterested pleasure in the game, nor does it amount to a refutation of the fact that such disinterested pleasure can be occasioned by different mental activities in different individuals.

I conclude, then, that Kant's attempt to *derive* the subjective universality of the pleasure from its disinterested character is unsuccessful.¹² But as I said earlier, this is not the only argument Kant offers in support of the thesis that the predicate 'beautiful' extends over the whole sphere of those who judge. One can find another line of thought in a passage that has elicited a great deal of controversy among commentators. This is the beginning of §9 in the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, where Kant seems to claim that the universal communicability, or capacity to be shared (*Mitteilbarkeit*), of the mental state in apprehending the object *is precisely what elicits the pleasure that is proper to the judgment of taste*. If this is so, there

¹² On this point I agree with Paul Guyer and disagree with Henry Allison. See Guyer (1997a), 117 and Allison (2001), 99–100. See also my discussion with Henry Allison in Longuenesse (2003), 152. See also Allison's response in the same issue of *Inquiry*, 186–7. Allison maintains (183) that in refusing Kant's claim that the subjective universality of taste can be *derived* from the disinterested character of the relevant pleasure, I deny the systematic nature of Kant's exposition of the four moments in the *Analytic of the Beautiful*. But I do not think this is true. In a standard analysis of a judgment as to its form, none of the four titles derives from any of the other: They are just four inseparable aspects according to which a judgment can be analyzed (quantity, quality, relation, modality). The fact that here what I have called the checklist of the four titles serves to bring to light a content does not alter the fact that each title defines in its own right a particular aspect of the judgment, as to its form and as to the content thought according to this form.

is no need anymore to ground the subjective universality of the judgment in the disinterestedness of the pleasure. Rather, the fact that the pleasure is a pleasure we take *in the universal communicability of our state of mind in judging the object* is a primitive fact and is itself a reason for defining the aesthetic pleasure as disinterested. The passage is worth quoting at some length:

§9 – *Investigation of the question: whether in the judgment of taste the feeling of pleasure precedes the judging of the object or the latter precedes the former.*

The solution of this problem is the key to the critique of taste, and hence worthy of full attention.

If the pleasure in the given object came first, and only its universal communicability were to be attributed in the judgment of taste to the representation of the object, then such a procedure would be self-contradictory. For such a pleasure would be none other than mere agreeableness of a sensation (*die bloße Annehmlichkeit in der Sinnesempfindung*), and hence by its nature could have only private validity, since it would immediately depend on the representation through which the object is given.

Thus *it is the universal communicability of the state of mind in the given representation*, which, as a subjective condition of the judgment of taste, must serve as its ground and have the pleasure in the object as a consequence. (§9, 217, last emphases added)

Kant's view here seems to be the following. If the pleasure we take in the object were the ground of our aesthetic judgment (the judgment that the object is beautiful), then the very claim that the judgment is universalizable (ought to be shared by all) would be self-contradictory. For a pleasure elicited by the object is a subjective feeling depending on the particular constitution of particular subjects, namely, the different ways in which they can be causally affected by the object. Such a feeling can thus only give rise to judgments such as "this is agreeable," where the implicit restriction is: "agreeable *for me*." This being so, the only remaining option is to reverse the relation between pleasure and universal communicability or the capacity to be shared, and to say that rather than the pleasure being the source of the universal communicability of the judgment, it is the universal communicability of the state of mind in judging the object that is itself the source of the pleasure. Here we bypass altogether the problem that was raised by the attempt to ground the universal communicability of the judgment on the disinterested character of the pleasure: The universal communicability is *itself* the source of a pleasure of a special kind, which grounds the judgment "this is beautiful."

Here one may object that aesthetic judgments are not the only kind of judgments about an empirically given object that can make a claim to the universal agreement of all judging subjects. Judgments of empirical cognition, insofar as they are true and known to be true, must be known to be true independently of the particular empirical state of the judging subject. In a much discussed passage from the *Prolegomena*, Kant tried to show what makes possible, in the case of empirical judgments, the transition from a “judgment of perception,” which is true only “for me, and in the present state of my perception” to a “judgment of experience,” which is true “for everyone, always.” He argued that such a transition is made possible by the a priori conditions grounding the possibility of all empirical knowledge. These conditions can be called ‘subjective’ because they belong to the cognitive capacities of the conscious subject. But they are *transcendental* and thus *universally shared* conditions, which alone make possible knowledge of any empirical object whatsoever.¹³ So if judgments of taste make a claim to the agreement of all judging subjects, they are certainly not the only judgments about empirical objects to make such a claim. Why then aren’t all empirical judgments accompanied by the same pleasure, and why aren’t all objects of empirical knowledge judged to be beautiful?

The first part of the answer we can suppose Kant would give to this question is that the comparison between aesthetic judgments of reflection and empirical judgments with respect to their universal communicability, or capacity to be shared, is indeed quite relevant. For aesthetic judgments, just like empirical judgments of cognition, start with acts of apprehending and reflecting on the object (looking for concepts under which the particular object might fall). And the outcome of both acts of judging (judgments such as “this rose is beautiful” in the case of aesthetic judgments, judgments such as “this is a rose” and “this rose is in bloom” in the case of empirical judgments of cognition) depend on the same representational capacities, imagination and understanding, and their agreement (imagination synthesizing in conformity to some concepts of the understanding in the case of cognitive judgments; imagination being in agreement with understanding *without falling under the rule of any particular concept* in the case of aesthetic judgment). Indeed if we return to the question Kant asks at the beginning of §9 (whether “in the judgment of taste the feeling of pleasure precedes the judging of the object or

¹³ See Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, §§18–22, AAIV 297–304.

the latter precedes the former”), the “judging” that turns out to precede the feeling of pleasure should be understood as *the act of reflecting upon the object, which puts into play imagination and understanding and elicits their mutual agreement*.

But if this were the whole answer, we would be left with the question stated earlier: Why, then, aren’t all empirical judgments of cognition accompanied with the same pleasure as that expressed in aesthetic judgments of reflection, “this X is beautiful”? Here comes the second part of the answer. In a judgment of empirical cognition, the outcome of the agreement of the imagination and the understanding is a concept that directs us to the object recognized under the concept. Thus, for example, the agreement of the imagination (which provides the rule of synthesis by which I generate for myself the image of a dog) with the understanding (which provides me with the empirical concept of a dog) leads me to recognize, in the animal I have in front of me, a dog. In aesthetic judgments, by contrast, the agreement of imagination and understanding does not stop at a specific concept (recognizing this as a dog, as a house, as a sunset . . .). Although the object judged to be beautiful can, of course, be recognized under concepts (e.g., “this rose is yellow,” “this rose is in bloom,” and so on), expressing an aesthetic judgment (“this rose is beautiful”) is expressing something different: The fact that in the mutually enhancing play of imagination (apprehending the object) and understanding (thinking it under concepts), *no* concept can possibly account for the peculiarity of my experience in apprehending the object. What remains in play to account for *this* experience is only the mutually enhancing or enlivening agreement of imagination and understanding itself and its universal communicability (its capacity to be shared). This universal communicability itself or, if you like, this feeling of communion with “the universal sphere of those who judge” that transcends all determinable concepts, is the source of the peculiar kind of pleasure that leads us to describe the object as beautiful.

One may then want to make the reverse objection: How can the comparison with empirical judgments of cognition be helpful at all? In their case, the universal communicability (capacity to be shared, *Mittelbarkeit*) of the agreement of imagination and understanding is the communicability of the outcome, the *subsumption of the object under a concept, or concepts*, and the possible agreement about *that* outcome. Absent such an outcome, how can such agreement occur, or if it occurs at all, how can it be manifest? Here the answer is that indeed the comparison with the case of empirical judgments of cognition is not sufficient

to ground the assertion that aesthetic judgments *do* rest on an agreement between imagination and understanding, or that the agreement in question is universally communicable. All it shows is how those judgments *might* rest on such an agreement or “free play” (unbound by concept). I shall return to this point when discussing the fourth moment of the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, where Kant addresses more explicitly the relation between aesthetic judgments and empirical judgments of cognition. For now, let me just note that already in the context of the second moment, Kant maintains that the universal communicability of the state of mind in the judgment of taste is “postulated” as a “universal voice” rather than expressed in a concept, as is the case for cognitive judgments.

My suggestion, then, is the following: According to Kant, the pleasure we experience in apprehending the object we judge to be beautiful is twofold. It is a first-order pleasure we take in the mutual enlivening of imagination and understanding in an act of apprehension and reflection that is not bound by the rule of any universal or particular concept. That's what Kant calls the free play of imagination and understanding. But that pleasure on its own would not yet be sufficient to constitute our experience of what we call aesthetic pleasure of reflection, pleasure in the beautiful. Another constitutive feature of that aesthetic pleasure is the sense that the mutual enlivening of imagination and understanding in apprehending the object, and the first-order pleasure it elicits, *could* and *ought to* be shared by all. This sense of a universal communicability (capacity to be shared) of a pleasurable state of mutual enhancement of imagination and understanding is the source of the second order pleasure that results in the aesthetic judgment “this is beautiful.” This is why the pleasure includes the peculiar kind of longing (the demand we make upon others to share in the pleasure we experience and to agree with the judgment we ground on that pleasure, “this is beautiful!”) that is characteristic of the aesthetic experience.

In claiming that for Kant, consciousness of the universal communicability of the state of mind in apprehending the object is *itself* a source of pleasure, I am in agreement with the view defended by Hannah Ginsborg, *pace* other prominent interpreters of Kant.¹⁴ But my view differs from hers in that for her the aesthetic pleasure is nothing but a self-referential act of judging, where the whole content of the act is the assertion of the

¹⁴ See Guyer (1997a), 139–40, Allison (2001), 110–18.

universalizability of *that very act of judging*.¹⁵ In my reading, according to Kant we take pleasure in the universal sharability of *the state of mind that is elicited in apprehending the object*: the “free play” (the mutually enhancing agreement, without the rule of a determinate concept) of our cognitive capacities, which is itself a pleasurable state.

Thus, without having to be derived from the first moment, the second moment of the Analytic of the Beautiful is consistent with its initial inspiration. The agreement of imagination and understanding, unbound by a determinate concept, is a free play where each enhances the activity of the other. The consciousness of that agreement is a source of pleasure, and the consciousness of the universal communicability of the free play and of the pleasure derived from it is *itself* a source of pleasure. The pleasure we take in the universal communicability of *a state of harmony*, namely, the combination of a second-order pleasure (the pleasure of communicability) and a first-order pleasure (the pleasure in the free play of imagination and understanding in apprehending a particular object) is what is expressed in the predicate of an aesthetic judgment of reflection, “this is beautiful.”

Let me recapitulate. I have argued that the peculiarity of the judgments of taste, as analyzed by Kant according to his leading thread, is that an explicit judgment about the object supports an implicit judgment about the judging subjects. We have seen what this thesis means in the case of the first two moments. According to the first moment, the predicate of the judgment of taste does not express a property that the judgment asserts of the object; nor does it express a disposition of the object to cause a state of pleasure in the subject. Rather, it expresses a pleasure elicited in the judging subjects by their own act of apprehending the object. According to the second moment, the pleasure thus elicited actually has two components: the first-order pleasure elicited by the free play

¹⁵ See Ginsborg (1991) and (1997). In the latter essay, Ginsborg seems to give more content to the aesthetic judgment than that of being a self-referential judgment that asserts nothing beyond its own universal validity. For what now seems to be universally valid (or, in her own words, what seems to be exemplary of a rule that has universal validity) is the activity of imagination in apprehending a particular object. Nevertheless, it remains that the aesthetic judgment, which is no other than the aesthetic pleasure itself, is the judgment that asserts this exemplary validity of my act of apprehension or asserts that my act of apprehension is “as it ought to be.” I agree with her insistence on the consciousness of universal validity as a component in the feeling of pleasure, but I disagree with her attempt to reduce the content of the judgment to this self-referential assertion of universal validity. See also her discussion of Allison’s view on this point in Ginsborg (2003), and my own discussion of Allison’s view in Longuenesse (2003), 152–5.

or mutually enhancing agreement of imagination and understanding, and the pleasure taken in the universal communicability of the pleasure thus elicited. Kant's striking thesis is that the consciousness of the universal communicability of the state of mind in apprehending the object is *itself* the source of the pleasure specific to a judgment of the beautiful. This is what is expressed by the clause I suggested we can find implicitly contained in the predicate of the judgment of taste: "All judging subjects, upon apprehending this object, ought to feel the same pleasure and to agree with my judgment."

This turning around, in Kant's *Analytic of the Beautiful*, from the manifest judgment about the object to the implicit judgment embedded in its predicate, finds its culminating point with the third title, "relation," which I will now consider.

3. RELATION IN AESTHETIC JUDGMENT: THE "PURPOSIVENESS WITHOUT A PURPOSE" OF THE APPREHENDED OBJECT AS THE GROUND OF THE "PURPOSIVENESS WITHOUT A PURPOSE" OF THE JUDGING SUBJECT'S STATE OF MIND. AND VICE-VERSA

In order to understand the question Kant poses himself under the heading of 'relation' in judgment, we must recall the significance of this heading in the table of logical functions in the first *Critique*.

What Kant calls 'relation' in a judgment ' S is P ' is the relation of the assertion of the predicate P (or, more precisely, the assertion that an object x belongs to the extension of the predicate P) to its ground or reason (*Grund*). The ground or reason of a judgment is what, in the subject S (in a categorical judgment) or in the condition added to the subject S (in a hypothetical judgment), justifies attributing the predicate of that judgment to all (or some, or one) object(s) x thought under S . For example, the ground of the attribution of the predicate 'mortal' to all objects x falling under the concept 'man' in the judgment "all men are mortal" is that the subject-concept 'man' can be analyzed into 'animal' and 'rational'. And 'animal', as containing 'living,' also contains 'mortal.' Similarly, in the judgment "Caïus is mortal," the ground of the attribution of the predicate 'mortal' to the individual named Caïus is the concept '*man*' under which the singular object *Caïus* is thought.¹⁶

When Kant examines judgments of the beautiful under the title of relation, the question he asks himself is: What grounds the assertion

¹⁶ On this example, see A321-2/B37.

of the predicate ‘beautiful’ in such judgments? Is it the subject *S* of the judgment (for example, ‘this rose’ in “this rose is beautiful”), and if so, what is it about this subject *S* that grounds the assertion of the predicate *P* (‘beautiful’)? Is it a character contained in the subject-*concept* (in which case the aesthetic judgment would be analytic) or is it something about the *experience* or perhaps even the mere *intuition* falling under that concept?

That the ground of predication is what is under examination in this third moment is attested to by passages such as this:

§11 – The judgment of taste has nothing but the *form of the purposiveness* of an object (or of the way of representing it) as its ground (*zum Grunde*).

Every end, if it is regarded as a ground of satisfaction, always brings an interest with it, as the determining ground of the judgment about the object of the pleasure. Thus no subjective end can ground the judgment of taste. But further no representation of an objective end, i.e. of the possibility of the object itself in accordance with principles of purposive connection, hence no concept of the good, can determine the judgment of taste, because it is an aesthetic judgment and not a cognitive judgment. . . .

Thus nothing other than the subjective purposiveness in the representation of an object without any end (objective or subjective) . . . can constitute . . . the determining ground [*der Bestimmungsgrund*] of the judgment of taste. (§11, 221)

As we can see, what is at issue here is the *Bestimmungsgrund* of the aesthetic judgment, namely, the ground of the determination of the subject with respect to the predicate, or the ground of the assertion that the subject falls under the predicate. Since the judgment is categorical, the ground of predication is to be found in the subject *S* of the judgment “*S* is *P*.” Now, as we have seen under the title of quantity, the subject of an aesthetic judgment is always singular (this rose). So the ground of the assertion of the predicate is the *intuition* by way of which the singular object is given. But according to the first moment (that of quality), the pleasure expressed in the predicate is disinterested: It is not caused by the existence of the object, nor does it depend on a moral interest we might take in the existence of that object. Rather, it is a pleasure elicited by our own mental activity in apprehending the object. In other words, it is a pleasure we derive from the *form* of the object insofar as this form lends itself, when we apprehend it, to the mutually enhancing agreement of our imagination and our understanding.

Now this feature of the object, that its form is such that apprehending it or synthesizing it is beneficial to the mutual enhancement of our imagination and understanding, is what Kant calls, in the text just quoted,

the "subjective purposiveness in the representation of an object, without any purpose either subjective or objective." The *ground* of the predication, then, in the judgment "this rose is beautiful" is the intuited form's disposition to elicit the mutually enhancing agreement of imagination and understanding in their apprehension of this form. The form of the object satisfies a subjective purpose – the agreement of the imagination and the understanding, and the pleasure thus elicited. But this subjective purposiveness of the form does not in any way justify us in supposing that an intention has actually presided over the creation of this form, with a view to satisfying this purpose. So the object is formally purposeful (its form satisfies a purpose: the mutually enhancing play of imagination and understanding), although we have no concept at all of how such a purpose might actually have been at work in producing this object.

Moreover, the purposiveness of the object – the fact that it satisfies an immanent purpose of the human mind, that of enhancing its own pleasurable life – is also a purposiveness *of the mind itself*. For again, what elicits pleasure is the free play and thus the mutual enhancement of the cognitive capacities (imagination and understanding) in the apprehension of the object, together with the feeling that such a free play, and the feeling it elicits, can be shared by all. The judging person's state of mind is therefore itself "purposive, without the representation of a purpose." The mental activity at work in apprehending the object judged to be beautiful is accompanied by the feeling *that a purpose is satisfied by it*: The purpose that the mind be precisely in the state it is in. And yet, here again we have no concept of *how* such a purpose is satisfied. Like the form of the object, the state of mind is purposive (it satisfies a purpose, that of maintaining the mind precisely in the state it is in) without the representation of a purpose (i.e., without any determinate concept of this purpose).

This twofold purposiveness – of the object, of the mental state itself – explains, I think, the title of the third moment of the *Analytic of the Beautiful*: "Third moment of judgments of taste, according to the relation of the purposes which in them are taken into consideration." The relation expressed in an aesthetic judgment is that of the purposiveness expressed in the predicate to the purposiveness expressed in the subject. A purposiveness is expressed in the predicate because the predicate 'beautiful' expresses the fact that a pleasure is elicited by the universal communicability of the mutually enhancing play of the imagination and the understanding. This purposiveness has its ground in the purposiveness of the *subject* of the judgment: the "purposiveness without a purpose" of the apprehended (synthesized) form of the intuited object.

If this is correct, then the judgment of taste is the culminating point of the Copernican revolution that began with the first *Critique*. For the ground of the assertion of the predicate in the judgment of taste is the intuited form of the object *precisely insofar as it is synthesized by the subject*. So in the object, what grounds the assertion of the predicate ‘beautiful’ are just those features that depend on *the synthesizing activity of the subject*.

This point is confirmed if we now consider the implicit judgment embedded in the predicate of the judgment of taste. I suggested earlier that the predicate ‘beautiful’ might be explained in the following way: ‘Beautiful’ means “such that apprehending it elicits in me a pleasure such that all judging subjects, in apprehending this same object, ought to agree with my judgment.” The implicit judgment embedded in the predicate (“all judging subjects, in apprehending this same object, ought to agree with my judgment”) is a categorical judgment: The ground of predication is to be found in the subject of the judgment, “all judging subjects.” And yet that ground is not to be found in the *concept* of a judging subject: It is not by virtue of a character I know to belong universally to all judging subjects that I claim that all of them ought to agree with my judgment. Nor is the ground of the predication to be found in my empirical knowledge of judging subjects. Rather, the ground for attributing the predicate “ought to agree with my judgment” to all judging subjects (or, in Kant’s terms, to “the whole sphere of those who judge”) is the capacity I attribute to all of those who judge to experience the very same feeling I presently experience. And my only ground for attributing to them this capacity is *the feeling itself as I experience it*.

Let me recapitulate again. I have argued that according to the moment of relation, the ground of the assertion of the predicate ‘beautiful’ is the purposiveness without a purpose of the *form* of the apprehended object. This purposiveness consists in the form’s capacity to elicit the mutually enhancing play of imagination and understanding in the apprehending subject. But the form of the object elicits such a mutually enhancing play of cognitive capacities only because it is a *synthesized* form, a form that is apprehended as the particular form it is only by virtue of the mental activity of the apprehending subject. Thus what *in the representation of the object* grounds the assertion of the predicate beautiful is *its dependence on the mental activity of the subject*. I have also argued that the implicit judgment embedded in the *predicate* of the aesthetic judgment (“all judging subjects, upon apprehending this object, ought to experience the same feeling and thus agree with my judgment”) is grounded on the capacity I postulate in all judging subjects (and indeed, as we shall see, demand of them) to

experience the free play of their cognitive capacities I myself experience in apprehending the object, and thus to share my feeling and agree with my judgment.

We will have to keep these two features in mind to understand Kant's view of the modality of judgments of taste, to which I now turn.

4. THE SUBJECTIVE NECESSITY OF JUDGMENTS OF TASTE

The modality of a judgment of taste, says Kant, is that of necessity. But what is 'necessary'? Is it the connection between the predicate and the subject in the manifest judgment about the object ("this rose is beautiful")? Or is it, rather, the connection between the predicate and the subject in the implicit judgment about the judging subjects ("all judging subjects, upon apprehending this rose, ought to experience the same pleasure and thus agree with my judgment")? If the former, what is said to be necessary is the connection between the object considered in its form and the pleasure I feel in apprehending it. If the latter, what is said to be necessary is the connection between the obligation implicitly assigned to all judging subjects (they "ought to agree with my judgment") and these judging subjects considered simply as such.

I submit that Kant wants to assert the necessity of both connections. He asserts at the outset that the relation *between the object and the satisfaction it elicits* is necessary: "Of the beautiful, . . . one thinks that it has a necessary relation to satisfaction" (§18, 237). But he then immediately goes on to assert the necessity *of the agreement of all judging subjects* with my judgment, taken as the example of a rule:

[The] necessity that is thought in an aesthetic judgment . . . can only be called *exemplary*, i.e. a necessity of the assent of *all* to a judgment that is regarded as an example of a universal rule that one cannot produce. (Ibid.)

Note that the situation here is not parallel to that of quantity. The quantity of the manifest judgment about the object was different from that of the implicit judgment about the judging subjects (the former was singular, the latter universal). In contrast, here the necessity of the latter (the implicit judgment about the judging subjects) seems to ground the necessity of the former (the manifest judgment about the object): Because all judging subjects ought to judge as I do, the relation of the predicate 'beautiful' to the subject of the manifest judgment can legitimately be asserted as necessary. We can understand why this is so: What is beautiful is the object *as apprehended*, and being beautiful is the same as

being *judged to be* beautiful. To say that all judging subjects ought necessarily to agree with my judgment is to say that the object *ought necessarily to be judged* beautiful or that the connection between the predicate ‘beautiful’ and the object is necessary.

This still does not tell us, however, how we should understand this modality of necessity. Is the necessity of the connection between “all judging subjects” and “ought to agree with my judgment” to be understood on the model of the subjective necessity of judgments of experience (because I claim objective validity for my judgment, I claim that all judging subjects ought to agree with my judgment)? Or is it to be understood on the model of a moral imperative: “All rational beings ought to act in such and such a way” (under the categorical imperative of morality)? Similarly “all judging subjects ought to judge as I do”?

Kant’s response, I suggest, is that both models are relevant. Indeed, both serve to clarify the crucial notion of a *sensus communis* on which Kant will later base his deduction of judgments of taste, namely, his justification of their claim to (subjective) universality and necessity.

Already in §20 of the fourth moment, Kant states that the subjective necessity of the judgment of taste is affirmed only under the condition that there be a common sense, *Gemeinsinn*. By ‘common sense’ he means “not any external sense, but rather the effect of the free play of our cognitive powers” (§20, 238), that is to say, the feeling that we have of this free play and of its universal communicability. This is in direct continuity with what was said in the first two moments of the *Analytic of the Beautiful*. As we saw, according to the first moment, the aesthetic pleasure is a disinterested pleasure elicited in the mind by its own activity in apprehending the object. According to the second moment, this activity is one of free play of imagination and understanding, and the pleasure expressed by the predicate beautiful is a both a first-order pleasure taken in this free play and a second-order pleasure in the universal communicability of the feeling thus elicited. The agreement of imagination and understanding in cognition and the universal communicability of that agreement provide an argument for at least supposing the possibility of a similar universal communicability of the state of mind in the free play of imagination and understanding, and thus a *sensus communis aestheticus* as the ground for the aesthetic pleasure expressed in the predicate ‘beautiful’. In this context, the obligation assigned to all judging subjects to agree with my judgment is not analogous to a moral obligation. Rather, it is analogous to the obligation to submit oneself to the norm of truth (the rule-governed agreement between imagination and understanding) in

cognitive judgments. And indeed, it is by drawing on the a priori agreement of imagination and understanding *in cognition* that Kant initially justifies the supposition of a common sense as the ground of aesthetic judgments:

One will thus with good reason be able to assume a common sense [*so wird dieser mit Grunde angenommen werden können*], and without appealing to psychological observations, but rather as the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition, which is assumed in every logic and every principle of cognitions that is not sceptical. (§21, 239)

But there is something surprising about this justification. For as we saw in discussing the second moment, what grounds the subjective universality and thus also the subjective necessity of cognitive judgments in the first *Critique* is not the *free* agreement of imagination and understanding, but their agreement *for the production of concepts*, that is to say, *according to the rules imposed by the understanding*. The fact that there is such an agreement (not free, but ruled by the understanding) may perhaps give us reason to believe in the *possibility* of a similar agreement even without a concept. But that does not give us sufficient grounds for *affirming* that such an agreement exists, and still less for affirming that it *necessarily* exists. Indeed Kant is more cautious when he writes:

This indeterminate norm of a common sense is really presupposed by us: our presumption in making judgments of taste proves that. Whether there is in fact such a common sense, as a constitutive principle of the possibility of experience, or whether a yet higher principle of reason only makes it into a regulative principle for us first to produce a common sense in ourselves for higher ends, thus whether taste is an original and natural faculty, or only the idea of one that is yet to be acquired and is artificial, so that a judgment of taste, with its requirement [*Zumuthung*] of a universal assent, is in fact only a demand of reason to produce such unanimity in the manner of sensing, and whether the *ought*, i.e. the objective necessity of the convergence of everyone's feeling with that of each, signifies only the possibility of such agreement, and the judgment of taste only provides an example of the application of this principle – this we neither want nor are able yet to investigate here; for now we have only to resolve the faculty of taste into its elements and to unite them ultimately in the idea of a common sense. (§22, 39–40)

As we can see, here the model for the subjective necessity of the judgment of taste is no longer the claim to necessary agreement proper to a judgment of experience, but rather the demand of moral duty. The a priori agreement of imagination and understanding in cognition allows us only to accept as *possible* the 'common sense' that would ground

aesthetic judgment; but the request of a universal agreement of rational agents under the moral law now appears to be a ground to *demand* that we cultivate in ourselves the capacity to develop a common sense. As we saw, already in the course of the second moment, Kant maintained that we *postulate* the “universal voice” under which we formulate a judgment of taste (cf. §8, 216).

Kant does not always clearly distinguish between the mere *possibility* of an agreement of everyone with my own evaluation, based on the free play of imagination and understanding, and the postulated *existence* of this agreement, as a capacity that each judging subject has an obligation to develop in himself and to demand of others. But it is important to keep this distinction in mind in order to free Kant of the burden of an all too evident objection, which we have already encountered in our examination of the second moment: If the *sensus communis*, understood generically as the universally communicable agreement of imagination and understanding, is the common ground of cognitive judgments and aesthetic judgments, why isn't every cognitive judgment the occasion of aesthetic pleasure? On the other hand, if there is merely a kinship, not a generic identity, between the *sensus communis* that grounds judgments of taste (a universally communicable free play and mutual enhancement of imagination and understanding in apprehending the object and reflecting upon it, known by feeling) and the *sensus communis* that grounds judgments in empirical cognition (a universally communicable agreement of imagination and understanding in apprehending the object and reflecting upon it, *known by virtue of the concepts that express it*, and thus not free, but rule-governed), why would the latter be a sufficient ground for admitting the existence of the former? This objection falls if Kant's argument for the existence of a *sensus communis* grounding aesthetic judgments has the two distinct steps mentioned earlier: (1) the universal communicability of the state of mind in cognition shows that it is *possible* that the agreement of the imagination and the understanding, even when it is not ruled and reflected by concepts (when it is a free play eliciting a feeling of pleasure), be universally communicable; (2) we *demand* that this agreement should be universally communicable, and because we demand it, we *make it* “as if a duty” to bring it about in ourselves and in others.

These two steps are expressed in the form of a question in the text quoted earlier: Should we consider the *sensus communis* as a natural capacity, or rather as the object of a higher demand of reason that we develop this capacity in ourselves and in others? The two steps will be confirmed

and amplified in the deduction of the judgment of taste (although again somewhat ambiguously). In the very short paragraph entitled "Deduction of the judgment of taste" (§38), Kant asserts again that the claim to subjective universality and necessity of our judgments of taste has the same ground as the claim to subjective universality and necessity of judgments of empirical cognition, justified in the first *Critique*. This is the first step in the two-step argument summarized previously. In the next section (§40), Kant adds:

If one was allowed to assume that the mere universal communicability of his feeling must in itself already involve an interest for us (which, however, one is not justified in inferring from the constitution of a merely reflective power of judgment), then one would be able to explain how it is that the feeling in the judgment of taste is required of everyone as if it were a duty (*gleichsam als Pflicht jedermann zugemutet werde*). (§40, 296)

Here's how I understand this passage: By itself, the "merely reflective" use of the power of judgment, namely, the use in which the play of imagination and understanding does not lead to a concept, would not suffice to explain why we demand of everyone, as if it were a duty, that they share our pleasure in the object we judge to be beautiful. Something else is needed in order to explain this demand, something that would make the *sensus communis* not only a *Gemeinsinn* (a common sense) but a *gemeinschaftlicher Sinn*: a sense by virtue of which we take ourselves to belong to a community of judging subjects. This something else is an interest that we take not in the *object* of the judgment (that possibility has been excluded in the course of the first moment), but *in the very fact of the universal communicability* of the judgment, that is to say, in the very fact that through this shared judgment we progress toward a community of judging subjects.

Indeed, in the next two sections Kant sets about explaining successively (1) that there is an *empirical* interest attached to the judgment of taste, that of developing sociability in ourselves, and (2) that there is an *intellectual* interest (an interest we have insofar as we are rational) in recognizing in nature and in ourselves the sensible sign of a common supersensible ground. In recognizing this supersensible ground, it is our own moral nature that we also recognize, and this makes the ought in "All judging subjects ought to agree with my judgment" closer to a *moral* "ought" than to the obligation assigned to cognitive subjects, to yield to the norms of truth in empirical judgments.

There is a caveat here. Only the beautiful in nature can give rise to such an *intellectual* interest. For only judgments about nature serve the interest of morality by pointing to the supersensible ground common to nature and to us. As for the beautiful in art, at most it serves the interest we have in the development of our natural tendency toward sociability, which is an empirical interest, grounded in the empirical characteristics of humanity as a natural species (§41, 96–7). Does this mean that only judgments of beauty in nature have the modality of necessity Kant tries to justify in his deduction of judgments of taste? This would be surprising, for all the examples Kant gives to illustrate the demand of a universal agreement with our judgments of taste concern the beautiful *in art* (see §§32–3). How are we to understand this apparent inconsistency? I think there are two answers.

The first can be found in the relation between *sensus communis* and *Aufklärung*. Kant emphatically endorses the three mottoes he attributes to *Aufklärung*: to think for oneself, to think by putting oneself in the position of all other human beings, to think always consistently (see §40, 294). Now, the universal communicability of judgments of taste, whether they apply to nature or to art, makes them uniquely apt to satisfy the first two maxims of the *Aufklärung*. And in their case, the third maxim is irrelevant: Any singular aesthetic judgment carries its own exemplary norm and thus is in no need of consistency with other judgments. In short, in the case of aesthetic judgments, the mere possibility of universal communicability of a feeling becomes the normative necessity of a duty to create the conditions of such universal communicability. And this applies to our experience of beauty in art just as much as in nature.

The second answer lies in Kant's conception of genius as a state of mind in which "nature gives the rule to art" (§46, 307). Relating artistic creation to genius defined in this way means giving judgments of taste applied to works of art their full share in the relation to the supersensible that is the ground of the subjective universality and necessity of aesthetic judgments applied to nature. This point is confirmed in the dialectic of the critique of taste, where Kant describes genius as the "faculty of aesthetic ideas" (§57, 344). An aesthetic idea, he says, is a sensible presentation of the supersensible, of which we neither have nor can have any determinate concept. Despite Kant's very Rousseauian suspicion of art and its relation to the ends of self-love, it remains that the beautiful in art, insofar as art is the creation of genius, lends itself to the same demand for the universal and necessary agreement of all judging subjects as does the beautiful in nature.

Now we may well find that we are asked to accept too much here. To have to suppose a consciousness of the supersensible ground common to the object and to ourselves, as the ground of the subjective universality and necessity of the aesthetic judgment, is more than most of us can swallow. However, Kant's analysis of the two judgments present in the judgment of taste – the manifest judgment about the object, the implicit judgment about the judging subjects – may lend itself to a lighter reading. One might accept the striking combination of a normative judgment about the judging subjects (expressed in the predicate of the judgment of taste as I have proposed to develop it) and a descriptive judgement about the object considered in its form (expressed in the manifest judgment of taste, “this *x* is beautiful”) while rejecting Kant's appeal to the supersensible as the ultimate ground of judgments of taste. One would then no longer have any reason to grant any privileged status to the beautiful in nature over the beautiful in art, since the main reason for that privilege seems to be that nature, not human artifact, is a direct manifestation of the supersensible that grounds aesthetic experience. In accounting for the specific features of judgment of taste, one may still maintain that the *mere possibility* of universally sharing aesthetic pleasure becomes a *normative necessity*, an obligation made to all human beings to take their part in the common effort to constitute humanity as a community of judging subjects, beyond the particular limitations of each historically and biographically determined sensing, feeling, emotional access to the world of sensory objects. This is, I think, the lasting legacy of Kant's view.

PART THREE

CREATIVITY, COMMUNITY, AND REFLECTIVE
JUDGMENT

Reflection, Reflective Judgment, and Aesthetic Exemplarity

Rudolf A. Makkreel

Although Kant considers a pure aesthetic judgment to be reflective in nature, he is also able to account for a wider range of prejudgmental and judgmental aesthetic responses. In the case of works of art, I will show that he allows for both reflective judgments about their beauty and determinant judgments about their meaning. But such an intersection of reflective and determinant judgments should not be seen as supporting the conclusion that their judgmental functions merge. Since determinant judgment proceeds from a given universal to particulars, it clearly involves a *subordinating* mode of thought. I will argue, however, that reflective judgment, which tends to begin with particulars, is a *coordinating* mode of thought. Determinant judgment appeals to universals to either describe the nature of particular objects or explain their behavior by subsuming them under the laws of the understanding. Reflective judgment, by contrast, is an expansive mode of thought that appeals not just to the understanding, but to reason as a framework for interpreting particulars. Because Kant calls reflection the power to compare a representation either with other representations or with our own cognitive powers, I want to underscore that reflective judgment is not so much about objects per se as about their relations to us. I will also make a case for the thesis that reflective judgment is orientational in that it enables the apprehending subject to put things in context while discerning his or her own place in the world.¹

¹ See Makkreel (1990); the relation between reflective judgment and reason is examined in Chapter 6 and the relation between reflective judgment and orientation in Chapter 8.

In the second half of this essay, I will claim that when the reflective power of judgment (*Urteilkraft*) functions aesthetically in relation to sense and feeling, it becomes a mode of evaluating or assessing (*Beurteilung*) that has normative force. I will explore this normativity of aesthetic judgment in relation to the idea of exemplarity. How is it possible for certain particulars to become exemplars, and to what extent can they orient us in making aesthetic assessments?

1. LOGICAL AND TRANSCENDENTAL REFLECTION AND THEIR RELATION TO REFLECTIVE JUDGMENT

Kant's assertion in the First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that when judgment applies universal concepts of nature "its reflection is at the same time determinative"² is used by Béatrice Longuenesse to align the functions of reflective judgment and determinant judgment more closely than has been usual. Accordingly, she claims that there are "judgments relating to the sensible given, which are not *merely* reflective, but determinative *as well*."³ A successful reflective judgment "consists not only in forming empirical concepts, but also applying them,"⁴ which is a determinative activity. It follows from this interpretation that the merely reflective judging involved in the claims of taste produces failed judgments because they do not "determine" anything. Indeed, Longuenesse writes: "What makes judgments *merely* reflective is that in them, the effort of the activity of judgment to form concepts fails."⁵

It strikes me as hermeneutically implausible to claim that the most explicit example of reflective judgment given by Kant, namely the aesthetic judgment, is a deficient version, whereas some other operations discussed elsewhere are successful versions. It behooves us to see whether there isn't a better way to relate reflective and determinant judgment.

I will argue that it is reflection – not reflective judgment, as Longuenesse claims – that can lead to determinant judgment. Moreover, the reflection that Kant relates to judgment in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is not a "reflection on the sensible,"⁶ as suggested by Longuenesse, but a "reflection about the concept of nature in general."⁷ Wanting

² Ak 20:212.

³ Longuenesse (1998), 164.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 164. I am grateful to Eric Wilson for pointing me to this passage and its import.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁷ Kant, First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 20:212.

to transport reflective judgment from the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* back to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, she asserts that the *application* of the categories already requires reflective judgment. This application is said to presuppose “a progress from sensible representations to discursive thought: the formation of concepts through comparison/reflection/abstraction, which is just what *reflective judgment* is.”⁸ I disagree: When Kant speaks of reflection in relation to the formation of empirical concepts, this is not yet reflective judgment; nor is this reflection a condition for the application of the categories. Being a priori and formal, categories such as substance and causality are applicable to all possible phenomenal objects. No special reflective or technical skill is necessary for their application. Whereas general logic leaves us without any guidance for applying concepts, transcendental logic is distinctive in supplying this for its concepts. Kant writes in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: “in addition to the rule . . . which is given in the pure concept of the understanding, it can at the same time indicate a priori the case to which the rules ought to be applied.”⁹ This application is spelled out in the chapter on schematization, not in the Amphiboly appendix on concepts of reflection, where Longuenesse looks for it.¹⁰

By linking Kant’s discussions of reflection in the lectures on logic, concepts of reflection in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and reflective judgment in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Longuenesse attempts to extract a common procedure whereby “*sensible* objects are reflected under *concepts*.”¹¹ In contrast, I will analyze these same three discussions in Kant with the intent of showing what is distinctive about each. They show some similarities, but they do not add up to a procedure of reflective subsumption.¹²

We can differentiate between reflection and reflective judgment by examining Kant’s final *Jäsche Logic*. Reflection as it relates to concept formation is treated in Sections 5 and 6, whereas reflective judgment is not examined until Sections 81 to 84. Reflection is related to the discursive

⁸ Longuenesse (1998), 164–5.

⁹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A135/B174.

¹⁰ I refer to the twofold claims made in Chapter 6 of *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* that the concepts of reflection of the Amphiboly appendix “express the rules for the reflective genesis of all concepts or . . . judgments” (Longuenesse 1998, 131) and that these come “prior to the *subsumption of empirical objects under categories*” (166).

¹¹ Longuenesse (1998), 115.

¹² Despite my criticisms of this, there is much to admire in the impressive ways Longuenesse has been able to elaborate the relations between Kant’s categories and the traditional table of logical or discursive judgments.

tasks of the understanding, whereas reflective judgment is considered a mode of inference geared to the more comprehensive aims of reason. Reflection as a logical act of the understanding considers the form of a concept “*subjectively*”; not how it determines an object through a mark, but only how it can be related to several objects.”¹³ This kind of *logical reflection*, as defined in Sections 5 and 6, is merely about subjective representations not about how they might produce determinate cognition of actual objects. Reflection as a purely discursive logical activity stays within the realm of mental representations and does not yet broach the realm of transcendental logic, which makes possible the cognition of objects.

In Section 6 of the *Jäsche Logic*, reflection is described as one of three logical acts of the understanding that can produce concepts in terms of form. It is preceded by comparison and followed by abstraction. Comparison relates the representations to the unity of consciousness, reflection then considers “how various representations can be encompassed in one consciousness,”¹⁴ and, finally, abstraction separates out “everything else in which the given representations differ.”¹⁵ Comparison and reflection both involve a “*zusammenhalten*”¹⁶ – they are ways of holding representations together without subordinating them to some defining mark of an object. Kant gives the example of generating the concept *tree* from comparing and reflecting on representations of a spruce, a willow, and a linden: “By first comparing these objects with one another, I note that they are different from one another in regard to the trunk, the branches, the leaves, etc.; but next I reflect on that which they have in common among themselves, trunk, branches, and leaves themselves, and I abstract from the quantity, the figure, etc., of these; thus I acquire a concept of a tree.”¹⁷ This concept can be referred to many objects, but does not yet constitute the determining mark *under* which objects can be subsumed to be cognized. What this means is that the reflected concept simply *analyzes* what several subjective representations have in common (*gemein*); it is not the kind of synthetic concept that can determine an object in the universal (*allgemeine*) way that is necessary for objective cognition. The resulting analytical concept of tree is more general in form than the concept of spruce, but it is still a weak representational form, not yet a rule-giving content or defining mark.

¹³ Kant (1992), 591.

¹⁴ Ibid., 592.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Kant, *Reflexionen zur Logik*, 2878; Ak 16:556.

¹⁷ Kant (1992), 592; Ak 9:94.

A constant theme of all of Kant's claims about reflection is its subjective basis. This is also true for Kant's first *Critique* discussion of concepts of reflection, which "only serve to describe in all its manifoldness the comparison of representations that is prior to the concept of things."¹⁸ Kant's concern with reflection here is not about arriving at knowledge of objects, nor is it about the logical reflection that goes into the form of concepts. It is about *transcendental reflection*, which considers representations in relation to the cognitive faculty to which they belong. Whereas logical reflection relates representations to consciousness in general, transcendental reflection relates them to the faculty that gave rise to them. This new mode of reflection distinguishes representations according to whether they belong to sensibility or to understanding. Once this subjective differentiation has been made about representations, we can then discern whether their relation to each other is one of identity or difference, agreement or opposition, whether they are related internally or externally or in terms of matter or form.¹⁹ Kant's examination of transcendental reflection uses these four pairs of concepts of reflection not to give determinant knowledge of objects as categories or empirical concepts do, but only to sort out what kind of object a representation can be about. Reflection now becomes orientational in that as it compares representations, it also assigns them their place in relation to possible objects of sense or understanding.

We have indicated that transcendental reflection is about relational concepts that come in coordinated pairs like inner and outer, matter and form. Although concepts such as matter and form are comparative in being reciprocally related, they are also contrastive and demand a weighing of alternatives. Thus, according to whether representations are located in sense or in the understanding, the priority of form or matter will differ. For phenomenal objects of sense, form precedes matter, but for intellectual objects of the understanding, matter precedes form. This reflective way of orienting ourselves to our representations is important, according to Kant, if we are to avoid the one-sided metaphysical stances of Locke and Leibniz, respectively. Locke's mistake was to "sensitivize" concepts, while Leibniz made the opposite error of "intellectualizing" appearances.²⁰ Concepts of reflection do not add to our knowledge of objects themselves, but consider them in terms

¹⁸ *Critique of Pure Reason* (1997a), A269/B325.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, A263/B319–A266/B322.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, A271/B327.

of *how we should represent them*. They establish what Kant calls a “transcendental topic”²¹ that differentiates between representations according to whether we should refer them to a phenomenal or noumenal world.

In Section 2 of the Introduction to the third *Critique*, Kant moves from this abstract topic that guides reflection to a more concrete topology for *reflective judgment* by distinguishing different regions in which we can locate or frame objects. Thus, when we refer concepts to objects, we delineate either a field (*Feld*), a territory (*Boden*), a domain (*Gebiet*), or an abode (*Aufenthalt*).²² Kant writes that “insofar as we refer concepts to objects without considering whether or not cognition of these objects is possible, they have their *field*, and this field is determined merely by the relation that the objects of these concepts have to our cognitive powers in general.”²³ Here again reflection relates objects to the subject. When we think of objects without determining whether they can be actualized in experience, we locate them as part of a field. They are conceived as logically possible, but not yet as transcendently possible or actualizable for cognition. A field is the most neutral way of framing objects and allows us to regard a ghost as belonging to the context of what can be conceived, even though it is an illusory object. When a concept refers to or means (*bedeutet*) an actual sensible object, then we can say that it has a *territory*. Nature as experienced by us can be said to be our territory. This territory of nature is a *domain* to the extent that the concepts legislate to it. Categorical concepts such as *causality* have their domain in nature because they necessarily apply to it. Empirical concepts simply have their *abode* in nature because we have derived them from what we contingently find there.²⁴

We may elaborate Kant’s orientational or regional distinctions between field, territory, domain, and abode by correlating them with the possible, the actual, the necessary, and the contingent, respectively. This enables us to speak of the field of the possible, the territory of the actual, the domain of the necessary, and the abode of the contingent as four modal relations that objects can have to us. When we locate an object in a territory or a domain, we are in a position to make a determinant judgment about it. By contrast, the field of the possible is merely the correlate of logical

²¹ Ibid., A268/B324.

²² *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 5:174.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

reflection, and the abode of the contingent is the correlate of reflective judgment.

The latter relation becomes intelligible once we recognize that reflective judgment has the capacity to discern “lawfulness” in what is ordinarily thought to be contingent.²⁵ Whereas determinant judgment subsumes particulars under already available universals, whether they be rules or laws, reflective judgment seeks universality wherever we are still left with a remainder of particularity. The abode of the contingent involves a collocation of facts that we happen to come across and that demonstrate no objectively necessary connection. What reflective judgment looks for then is a subjective necessity. From the standpoint of the understanding, every event is subsumable under some law, but the explanative laws of nature could be so diverse that we could never grasp nature as a whole as anything more than an aggregate. A systematic order of nature demands a rational coherence that is intrinsically contingent from the standpoint of the understanding. “The power of judgment presumes [it] of nature . . . only for its own advantage” as a formal purposiveness of nature.²⁶ Kant makes it evident that this concept of a purposiveness of nature is nothing more than a subjective mode of representing nature, or, to use more contemporary language, of interpreting it.

Being neither a concept of nature nor a concept of freedom, purposiveness is a mere reflective representational concept that has no rule-giving content through which we could attain knowledge of any objects. “This transcendental concept of a purposiveness of nature . . . attributes nothing at all to the object (of nature), but rather only represents the unique way in which we must proceed in reflecting on the objects of nature with the aim of a thoroughly interconnected experience. Consequently, it is a subjective principle (maxim) of the power of judgment.”²⁷ The reflective principle of systematicity prescribes a purposiveness of nature that is relative to the subject and its rational need for order. When we do find such systematic unity we feel pleasure; here lies the connection between reflective judgment and aesthetic judgment. Purposiveness as the lawfulness of the contingent is never predictable. It is something unexpected, and the surprise in discerning it produces pleasure. Since there is always

²⁵ This becomes evident in §§76 and 77 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, where Kant reflects on contingency at length and shows that what we humans call “purposiveness” is the “lawfulness of the contingent” (§76, Ak 5:404).

²⁶ Kant, First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 20:204.

²⁷ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 71; Ak 5:183.

something presumptive about the principle of purposiveness, reflective judgment can only prescribe it to itself, not to nature.²⁸

When we return to Kant's *Jäsche Logic* and consider Sections 81–4, it becomes even clearer that reflective judgment is more than the logical reflection that goes into comparing and analyzing our representational concepts. For reflective judgment is now explicated in terms of two modes of inference. Whereas logical reflection in the service of the understanding finds what is common among given representations, reflective judgment goes beyond such particular givens in search of a universal. Being inferential, it is geared to reason. The search for universality involved in reflective judgment proceeds “either 1) from *many* to *all* things of a kind, or 2) from *many* determinations and properties, in which things of one kind agree, to the remaining ones, insofar as they belong to the same principle.”²⁹ The first mode is an inductive inference, the second an inference from analogy in accordance with a “principle of specification.”³⁰ Induction argues from the premise that many *x*'s are *y* to the conclusion that all are *y*. Specifying analogies proceed from the partial similarity of things to their overall similarity. Although both inferences are oriented to reason, they are empirical and do not produce true universality. Induction really argues from particularity to “general rather than universal propositions;”³¹ specifying analogies really proceed from parts to wholes.

How then does this twofold characterization of reflective judgment in the *Jäsche Logic* relate to Kant's discussions of reflective judgment in the third *Critique*? Obviously, aesthetic judgments as functions of the power of reflective judgment are not inductive inferences, because they remain singular. When Kant claims the judgment “this rose is beautiful” to be universally valid, he is not generalizing that all roses are beautiful. Instead, an aesthetic judgment about a particular rose indicates a subjective response that is also claimed to be valid for others. The contingent pleasure that I feel in contemplating the rose is judged to apply not just to me, but to “us human beings.”³² The generalization made is not an inductive prediction, but anticipates how we humans should respond.

²⁸ Kant makes a stronger assertion in the case of teleological judgments. Here an organism is described as functioning in such a way as to preserve itself (a regulative claim), and we interpret this effect as its telos (a reflective claim valid for us humans).

²⁹ Kant (1992), 626, Ak 9:132.

³⁰ Ibid., 626, Ak 9:133.

³¹ Ibid., Ak 9:133.

³² *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 5:462.

If the aesthetic judgment is not inductive, is it then a specifying inference by analogy? This suggests a more promising alternative because Kant does in fact appeal to reflective analogies when he explores the contribution of aesthetic ideas to matters of taste. But the capacity to appreciate beauty by no means requires us to specify the objects being judged in such detail as to argue from partial similarity to an overall similarity. Total similarity is more relevant to teleological judgment where organisms are considered as integral systems in which the parts function harmoniously and can maintain equilibrium. The reflective principle of specification that guides questions of system – whether they concern the systematization of the laws of nature or some more limited teleological questions about organisms – seems to push the aesthetic apprehension of reflective analogies a step further.

Reflective judgment in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, whether it is used aesthetically or teleologically, is clearly comparative and coordinative. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the coordination involved in reflective specification means nothing more than placing things side by side as a mere aggregate. According to Kant, coordination produces an aesthetic-technical “order.”³³ The reflective concern with coordination is to find “sufficient kinship”³⁴ among empirical laws to allow them to be part of a common system. To be sure, when relating laws within a systematic framework, we must consider whether some empirical laws may turn out to be species of higher generic laws. Kant’s full answer to the problem of systematization requires us to approach it not merely as the *mechanical* task of subordinating particular laws to already known higher laws. Instead, the task of systematization is a *technical* one of adjusting parts to wholes.³⁵ The higher laws must themselves be revisable or specifiable to make room for the lower laws. Thus Kant writes that we must “make the universal concept more specific by adducing or taking into account (*anführen*) the manifold under it.”³⁶ Kant here rejects the common assumption that specification applies merely to the particulars that may be subordinated to a universal. Instead, the reflective specification involved in systematization applies to the universal itself. It is the process whereby a universal comes to reflect particulars by being coordinated with them. In the end, coordination is less about lateral comparison than about the mutual adjustment of the parts of a system.

³³ See Kant, *Reflexionen zur Logik*, Ak 16:121.

³⁴ First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 20:215.

³⁵ See *ibid.*, Ak 20:213f.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Ak 20:215.

Coordination as a feature of reflective judgment is to be distinguished from mere juxtaposition on the one hand, and subordination on the other. Reflective coordination can be characterized as a search for the appropriate context in which it becomes possible to understand phenomena in reciprocal terms, that is, not merely by means of relations of dependence, but also as potentially interdependent. As part of a more general process of orientation to the world at large, reflective coordination allows for a differentiation of modes of intelligibility – we have already seen this in the regional distinctions between field, domain, territory, and abode. These modalities cannot all be definitively subordinated to each other.

In this section, we have seen that logical reflection holds representations together to discern an analytical unity, that transcendental reflection differentiates paired opposites, and that reflective judgment specifies the relation between universals and particulars. All these operations function in a comparative and coordinative context and suspend the subordinative nature of synthetic cognition. Whereas subordinative determination establishes unidirectional, top-down relations of dependence, reflective coordination is a process of reciprocal adjustment. For these reasons, I find no basis in Kant for Longuenesse's recurring language of objects or sensible manifolds being "reflected under concepts."³⁷ We should thus resist efforts to make reflective judgment part of the subordinative mode of thought that characterizes determinant judgment. There is no doubt that reflective considerations go into empirical determinations, but we should not reduce the systematic considerations that led Kant to explore reflective judgment to something that, in the words of Longuenesse, is "prior to the *subsumption of empirical objects under categories*."³⁸

So far, I have argued that the reflective judgment appealed to in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is not the logical reflection that Longuenesse sees at work in empirical concept formation and in the inductive procedures of scientific inquiry grounded by the *Critique of Pure Reason*. To more fully explore the second question about the relation between aesthetic judgment and the reflective appeal to analogies, I will provide a more open-ended analysis of judgments of taste. Section 1 was an attempt to find the proper place of reflective judgment in Kant's intellectual system. Section 2 is an attempt to locate aesthetic judgments in their historical and cultural contexts and to consider their normative status.

³⁷ Longuenesse (1998), 64, 68, 122, 165, 179, 185, 298f.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

2. REFLECTING ON PREJUDICES OF TASTE AND AESTHETIC SCHEMATIZATION

Ordinary judgments of experience are determinant judgments about the properties of objects that can be confirmed or disconfirmed by observation. Aesthetic judgments also refer to objects, but disclose more about our state of mind than about what is apprehended. Thus beauty, for Kant, is not some experiential quality that adds to our knowledge of any object. When we make a purely aesthetic judgment about x , we merely assert that x has a form that puts our cognitive faculties in a state of harmony that we feel to be pleasurable. It is a subjective judgment of taste, but it is more than a report of the causal effect that the object has on us. If it were merely that, it would also be a determinant judgment based on self-observation or introspection. And because introspective claims are subject to doubt, it would be a deficient mode of determinant judgment about a particular state of mind.

A pure judgment of taste is not an empirical report about a subject's emotional state, but a normative reflective judgment that projects a felt agreement with other subjects. It is not a descriptive *Urteil*, but a prescriptive *Beurteilung*.³⁹ What is the source of this normativity? For Kant, it is transcendental. The aesthetic judgment transforms an empirical determinant judgment about an object into a disinterested reflective judgment that expresses a subjective assessment. A disinterested judgment is one in which I suspend my normal theoretical and practical interests in the existence of the object being apprehended. If I can so neutralize my relations to an object, I should be able, according to Kant, to apprehend it purely. Thus he assumes that beauty involves the feeling of a pure disinterested pleasure. This feeling may be a response to the object apprehended but is not determined by it.⁴⁰ Aesthetic appreciation is a free evaluative response to the object's formal purposiveness, which does nothing more than allow the cognitive faculties to operate in harmony with each other. Aesthetic pleasure is the feeling of this equilibrium. On the assumption that all human beings share the same faculties, Kant concludes that a disinterested judgment of taste is universally valid. Without this Enlightenment tenet, all we can say is that the aesthetic judgment makes a normative demand that it be a shared judgment. Whereas Kant assumes that the *sensus communis* postulated by taste represents a universal

³⁹ First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 20:211.

⁴⁰ See also the later discussion of the noncompelling influence of precedents.

community, we merely expect a general sharing that may in fact be less inclusive. There is no need to equate the common, the general, and the universal.

Kant first calls the aesthetic judgment *gemeingültig*, which means generally or commonly valid, in Section 8 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*,⁴¹ but later substitutes the term *allgemeingültig*, which means universally valid. A similar shift is discernible in Section 22, where Kant writes: "The necessity of the universal assent that we think in a judgment of taste is a subjective necessity that we represent as objective by presupposing a common sense (*Gemeinsinn*)."⁴² If we can presuppose that we all have a common sense, then we can ground the judgment of taste in a constitutive principle of experience and treat it as objective. However, this is not really Kant's standpoint. Section 34 makes it clear that an objective principle of taste is impossible. Moreover, the *sensus communis* appealed to in Section 40 is not a grounding principle, but what I would call an 'orientational' principle. This communal sense (*gemeinschaftlichen Sinnes*) is a possibility to be cultivated rather than something presupposed. Rather than being an innately endowed common sense, the communal sense aims at an ideal community. Thus the generality of the aesthetic judgment is not rooted in some existing commonality, but projects a normative universality to be arrived at by the human community.

Having introduced these distinctions, it is possible to generate the following scale of aesthetic consensus: (1) a shared pleasure that is the product of a common background, (2) a general pleasure that is reflective or comparative in a purifying sense – here the subject abstracts from its private peculiarities – and (3) Kant's own ideal of a shared aesthetic pleasure that is universal in claiming to be valid for all human beings. The last kind of aesthetic consensus corresponds to Kant's "power to judge that in reflecting takes account (a priori) in thought of everyone else's way of representing."⁴³

The first kind of aesthetic consensus is a function of popular taste and is therefore subject to fashion. The second kind involves reflective judgment and is normative in a transcendental sense. I think that this comes closest to what Kant actually justifies in his attempts to purify human feeling and clarify taste. The third and final kind of aesthetic consensus can be seen as aiming at a universal ideal. It takes what is

⁴¹ *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 5:214.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Ak 5:239.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Ak 5:293.

reflectively orientational and coordinated with a general sense of community (the second kind of consensus) and transforms it into an a priori expectation of universal agreement that I can only regard as regulative and hypothetical.⁴⁴

What I will focus on as most relevant in Kant's aesthetics is the relation between (1) and (2). The first kind of consensus is due to a common cultural background. This is what, in his lectures on logic, Kant speaks of as being the product of a *prejudice of taste*. The second kind of aesthetic consensus, by contrast, can be called the *pure judgment of taste*. What then is the relation between a prejudice of taste and a judgment of taste?

In *The Blomberg Logic*, Kant distinguishes between logical and aesthetic prejudices. The latter are also called prejudices of taste in the same lectures. Kant sees aesthetical prejudices as imitating fashion and warns that "Taste is quite ruined by imitation, a fertile source of all prejudices, since one borrows everything, thinks nothing of a beauty that one might be able to invent and come up with oneself."⁴⁵ One's taste is a mere prejudice if one reproduces what is common or customary in one's background – one merely imitates the *examples of fashion*. Criticisms like this have led Gadamer to claim that Kant was too harsh on prejudices and shared an Enlightenment prejudice against prejudices.⁴⁶ Actually, Kant warns that we should not immediately reject each and every prejudice! Indeed, we should, in his words, "test them and investigate whether something good may yet be found in them."⁴⁷ He then goes on to say, "one can actually find a kind of prejudice against prejudices, namely, when one immediately rejects everything that has arisen through prejudices."⁴⁸

It is important to underscore that Kant allows our cultural tradition to provide us with useful prejudices that can guide our taste. Tradition is able to offer us possibilities from the past that are lacking in the present.

⁴⁴ I find an interesting analogue to my earlier discussion of Béatrice Longuenesse in the fact that in this volume she argues that the merely reflective standpoint used by Kant to explicate pure taste does "not suffice to explain why we *demand* of everyone, as if it were a duty, that they share our pleasure." (See her essay in this volume.) If our overriding concern becomes a deduction of taste, then the free coordinative assent involved in pure taste can evolve into an actual duty to which we must subordinate ourselves. The "demand" for agreement that Longuenesse attributes to Kant represents a rather forceful translation of *Zumutung*, which Guyer and Matthews translate more appropriately as "expectation" and which I would render even more modestly as "presumption." We may merely presume that others will agree with our judgments of taste.

⁴⁵ Kant (1992), 136; Ak 24:173.

⁴⁶ Gadamer (1992), 271–6.

⁴⁷ Kant (1992), 133, Ak 24:169.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 133, Ak 24:169.

But not until we reflect on prejudices will they be properly appropriated. The common prejudices with which we grow up will become useful only if we use reflection to suspend them and transform them into something provisional or preliminary. Both prejudices (*Vorurteile*) and preliminary judgments (*vorläufige Urteile*) are modes of prejudgment (*präjudicium*).⁴⁹ But whereas prejudices are unreflective and tend to rush to judgment, preliminary judgments introduce a reflective moment that sets the stage for further inquiry. They transform a common prejudice into a judgment to be reflected on (*judicium reflectens*). The fact that preliminary judgments appeal to reflection does not as such make them into reflective judgments as they are defined in the third *Critique*. A reflective judgment is not merely subject to reflection, but is the outcome or product of actual reflection and could be called a *judicium reflectivum*.⁵⁰ Another difference seems to be that a preliminary judgment reflects on the content of a prejudice, whereas a reflective judgment reflects on its form. A preliminary judgment neutralizes the content of a prejudice to transform it into a hypothetical claim that can then regulate further inquiry.

In his *Jäsche Logic*, Kant characterizes the reflection involved here in the way he had defined transcendental reflection in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely, seeing “to which cognitive power a cognition belongs.”⁵¹ Reflection allows us to pass from the persuasion that comes with holding a prejudice to the conviction that investigation can produce, but it need not. The transition occurs only if reflection is used critically to temporarily suspend judgment. It can also be used skeptically to permanently refrain from judgment.⁵² Accordingly, Kant says that “many remain with the persuasion of prejudice, some come to reflection, few to investigation.”⁵³ Only investigation can produce proper determinant judgments.⁵⁴ It is clear once again that reflection is not a subsidiary component of determinant judgment, for the deferral of judgment that is involved in reflection “consists in the resolution not to let a mere preliminary judgment become *determining*.”⁵⁵ A preliminary judgment is thus a product of reflection “in which I *represent* that while there are more

⁴⁹ Ibid., Ak 24:161.

⁵⁰ See Makkreel (1996), 70–1.

⁵¹ Kant (1992), 576, Ak 9:73.

⁵² Ibid., Ak 9:74.

⁵³ Ibid., 576, Ak 9:73.

⁵⁴ The qualification “proper” was added because prejudices are already determinant – to be sure, pseudo-determinant – judgments.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Ak 9:74.

grounds for the truth of thing than against it, these grounds still do not suffice for a *determinate* or *definite* judgment.”⁵⁶

The aesthetic prejudice that considers Greek sculpture to be great can be transformed by reflection either into a proper aesthetic judgment or into a cognitive inquiry governed by the question, what has made Greek sculpture so culturally significant to so many generations? The first route is that of reflective judgment, the second that of a preliminary judgment, which can generate hypothetical or regulative propositions that can be tested by empirical investigation and thereby become a determinant judgment. This empirical investigation into taste is not the route that Kant is proposing. For him, a pure judgment of taste declaring a Greek statue to be beautiful would use reflection to produce a normative reflective judgment. It goes to the heart of the process of aesthetic apprehension by focusing on its formal purposiveness in creating a harmony of the faculties that enlivens the mind. It suspends the prejudice of taste, not regulatively or hypothetically, but transcendently. What this means is that the *example* that is blindly imitated by aesthetic prejudice is transformed into something properly *exemplary*.

The pure judgment of taste may reflectively orient itself to the judgments of others, but it should not imitate them. Similarly, Kant suggests that an artist can orient himself to the works of prior talents and be “thereby awakened to the feeling of his own originality, to exercise his freedom from coercion in his art in such a way that the latter thereby acquires a new rule by which the talent shows itself as exemplary.”⁵⁷ When we look at others as exemplary, we are inspired to draw on our own resources as well. The examples passively stored in prejudices of taste can be transformed into exemplary judgments of taste that we can actively share. What we use as an example serves solely as an external constraint. But what we take as exemplary functions as an external guide that awakens an internal source as well. We find this same coordination of external and internal references in Kant’s account of spatial orientation. Thus I discern my place in the world by reference both to the external position of the sun and to my internal capacity to distinguish left from right.⁵⁸

We might pause here to note that the capacity of reflective judgment to make some particulars exemplary is the counterpart of its capacity to

⁵⁶ Ibid., 577, Ak 9:74.

⁵⁷ *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 5:318.

⁵⁸ See Kant, “What Is Orientation in Thinking?”, Ak 8:134.

specify a universal, discussed in Section 10. In both cases, particulars and universals are brought in proximity by being coordinated.

Whereas examples provide determinate images with the power to bind us, the exemplary can be said to be like an indeterminate schema that leaves the imagination some flexibility in how to proceed. In Section 35 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant says that the aesthetic imagination schematizes without concepts, but he is not very helpful in spelling out what this means. He contrasts this with schematization in the *Critique of Pure Reason* by explaining that here we are not subsuming particular intuitions under concepts, but rather coordinating the imagination and the understanding in general as faculties that can reciprocally enliven each other. But there is more to be said about schematization without a concept. In the first *Critique*, schematization is the process whereby concepts that are purely logical are explicated temporally to make them experientially meaningful: The imagination serves the understanding by making possible determinant judgments that apply universal concepts to particular objects. In the third *Critique*, aesthetic schematization without concepts must be conceived in terms of reflective judgment – thus here the movement is from particular to universal. An aesthetic or reflective schema is a particular that is felt to be valuable. There being no directing concept, aesthetic schematization is merely orientational. It allows a particular fact embedded in the “abode” of our prejudices to be freed from its contingency by relocating it in a broader “territory” – giving us more space to gain our bearings. Aesthetic schematization may be seen as a kind of *epoché* that suspends prejudices of taste to prepare us to judge things from the general perspective of human sensibility. It is “merely reflective” in the positive sense of indicating something humanly valuable or significant.⁵⁹

If schematization as such is the explication of meaning, then we can distinguish two modes of such explication: the determinant explication of the meaning of universal concepts as rules of application and the reflective explication of the meaning of intuitive particulars that locates something common or general in them. To reflectively schematize a particular would be to present it as normative – as an exemplary model or general type.

We need reflective schemata in judging beauty because we cannot rely on self-evident determinant schemata or rules. Although judgments of

⁵⁹ See also Gasché (2003), who argues that the “merely reflective” quality of aesthetic judgment points to its ability to “shed light on an affective dimension” that is a “necessary subjective component of all cognitive mental life” (26).

taste must be self-validated, it would be foolish not to consider the judgments of others. Kant writes: "If each subject always had to start from nothing but the crude predisposition given him by nature, [many] of his attempts would fail, if other people before him had not failed in theirs."⁶⁰ We can be autonomous even while we take into account what others before us have done, if only to learn from their mistakes. Accordingly, Kant defines cultural progress in terms of the human species as a whole. Whereas good taste must overcome the fashions of prejudice based on unthinking imitation, it will always need to rely on exemplary models or precedents. By relating taste to the exemplary and the influence of precedents, Kant places aesthetic norms in a public framework. It is not enough to say that the individual subject adopts "a normative attitude towards her mental activity" by taking it "to be appropriate" and then expecting "that everyone ought to judge it in the same way."⁶¹ Having located the normative in the public domain from the start, Kant requires us to regard the constraints of the normative as coming from both within and without. He attempts to create this coordinative balance by considering a kind of historical influence that does not deprive the individual of his or her autonomy. To conceive this noncompelling kind of influence, he introduces a distinction between emulation (*Nachfolge*) and imitation (*Nachahmung*). This is how Kant puts it: "*Emulation* of a precedent, rather than imitation, is the right term for any influence that products of an exemplary author may have on others; and this means no more than drawing on the same sources from which the predecessor himself drew, and learning from him only how to go about doing so."⁶² To consider a model as a precedent is not to appeal to it as a determining ground, but merely to orient oneself by it as potentially valuable or worth committing to.⁶³ The task of emulation is not merely to reproduce a standard, but to

⁶⁰ *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 5:283.

⁶¹ This is how Hannah Ginsborg characterizes the normativity of taste in her essay in this volume.

⁶² *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 5: 283.

⁶³ The question is, what kind of constraint does a precedent put on the judging subject? Although Kant considers the position of the other in reflective assessment, I do not think he is ready to acknowledge Robert Brandom's double scorekeeping, where "the commitments a scorekeeper *attributes* to someone outrun those that the individual *acknowledges*" (Brandom 1994, 646). Because Brandom sees us as embedded in social and linguistic practices, many of the normative commitments that an individual acknowledges involve inferential commitments that only another scorekeeper can recognize. There is thus always a gap between the normative theoretical commitments that individuals acknowledge and those that they have implicitly undertaken.

Brandom begins with something like Kant's own distinction between what I hold to be true (*Fürwahrhalten*) and what is true. But whereas for Kant this gap can be filled by

refine it. This demands something like what is called ‘reflective endorsement’ in the moral domain.⁶⁴ The emulation of reflective precedents allows us to relate the ‘territory’ of aesthetic judgment to a ‘domain’ of mutual accountability, but in a way such that no one is compelled.

A reflective schema or precedent is not a determinate example, but an indeterminate exemplar. In fact, Kant’s judgments of taste declaring something to be beautiful are indeterminate too – precisely to leave room for human agreement. However, not all aesthetic judgments need be that indeterminate. Especially when we judge a work of art, we want to be able to specify some of the features that make it beautiful. Thus, in drawing attention to aspects of its form, it is appropriate to describe how the figures in a painting stand in relation to each other and how the distribution of light leads the eye in certain directions. These are descriptive determinant claims that can be used by a critic to try to convince others that a painting deserves acclaim. Here we are making cognitive claims about an aesthetic object, which means that we are moving beyond pure aesthetic judgments. Kant himself acknowledges that in responding to works of art, it is appropriate to recognize that the artist has a creative purpose that he is communicating. Whereas beauty as such is purposive without having a purpose, that is, merely playful and suggestive, artistic beauty is purposive in a more determinate way. Artists are generally serious about creating an effect on their audience, although they must not be too obvious about this. To the extent that literary artists have a purpose in creating, concepts can be found to articulate their intent. But a great poet will always express more than what is directly communicated by available concepts.

Such a surplus of meaning is illustrated by a line of poetry that Kant quotes in Section 49. The line “The sun streamed forth as serenity streams from virtue”⁶⁵ provides more than a conceptual description of a beautiful sunrise. According to Kant, the poet is presenting an aesthetic idea that evokes more thought than can be “comprehended within a determinate

expanding my own perspective into that of a shared community or tradition (expanding the I into a we), Brandom sees here a wider gap between an I and thou, which means that “there is never any final answer as to what is correct” (ibid., 647). For Brandom, it may be what I am unconsciously committed to that is ultimate, whereas for Kant, there can be no ultimate commitment that has not been consciously endorsed. This becomes especially obvious when we move from the domains of the theoretical and practical to the territory of the aesthetic. For how am I to assert a judgment of taste without its adequately reflecting me?

⁶⁴ See Korsgaard (1996), 49–89.

⁶⁵ *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 5:316 – Kant here quotes a line from J. Withof.

concept.”⁶⁶ The joy produced by the rising sun is suffused with the serenity produced by virtue. A relation between the natural world and the realm of freedom is suggested that enlivens our cognitive powers. It is clear then that in judging art we can use concepts to make at least some determinant cognitive judgments. Yet works of art are suggestive in ways that may leave many of our judgments anticipatory and indeterminate again. Aesthetic ideas are introduced to orient us to rational ideas, and it is through aesthetic ideas that beauty can become a symbol for the rational idea of moral virtue.

The symbol adds another mode of exhibiting meaning for Kant and further extends his theory of schematization. In Section 59 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, he describes schemata and symbols as two modes of presenting or explicating meaning.⁶⁷ We have already spoken of schemata as explicating the meaning of concepts of the understanding. Then we suggested that schematizing without a concept when making a judgment of taste allows us to consider particular examples of good taste as orienting models. Symbols, in turn, explicate the meaning not of concepts of the understanding, but of ideas of reason. Whereas the categories of the understanding are directed at making sense of our experiences, ideas of reason tend to transcend experience. How then can a symbol exhibit the meaning of ideas? A symbol does not create a direct intuitive counterpart for the abstract idea. It merely allows us to intuit something analogous. There is no sensuous content that can exemplify the rational idea of moral goodness. The sun by itself cannot be a symbol for the good. Yet we may be said to stand in similar relations to the sun and to the good to the extent that both uplift us. The sun becomes a symbol of the good if in reflecting on our relation to both we find some formal analogies there. Once we have found some analogue, we can use our reflection on experiential relations to specify relations among more abstract ideas.

Symbolization can create reflective analogies between our experience and ideas that surpass (*übertreffen*) experience.⁶⁸ Aesthetic judgments that are symbolical could be said to approximate the reflective principle of specification discussed earlier by presuming greater similarity on the basis of partial similarity, but they will never claim overall or total similarity. Analogies based on aesthetic ideas are used to fill in or complete

⁶⁶ Ibid., Ak 5:315.

⁶⁷ For a more detailed analysis of schemata and symbols as functions of the imagination see Makkreel (1990), especially Chapters 2 and 6.

⁶⁸ *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, §49, Ak 5:314.

experience rather than to totalize it in the manner of rational ideas. Symbolical judgments are anticipatory, like preliminary judgments and like reflective aesthetic judgments of taste that demand the agreement of others. But what symbols anticipate cannot be confirmed objectively by experience or subjectively by the agreement of others. Instead, symbolical judgments can merely extrapolate from experience. Preliminary aesthetic judgments anticipate content; reflective aesthetic judgments anticipate formal agreement; symbolical aesthetic judgments anticipate reflective analogies that allow us to coordinate the form and content of experience. When aesthetic judgment goes over into symbolization, we have a clear case of *Überlegung* or reflection becoming *Auslegung* or interpretation. Here reflective judgment coordinates representations to lay out (*aus-legen*) a “field” of possibilities and expands them by a process of imaginative *Ausbildung* or completion. In this context, we can also make sense of the fact that the German word used by Kant for symbolization is *Gegenbildung* – the process of creating coordinated counter images, that is, images that reinforce or enliven each other.

Instead of regarding reflective judgment as proto-experiential or subservient to the conceptual needs of the understanding, it should be considered as meta-experiential.⁶⁹ It attempts through a process of

⁶⁹ Paul Guyer’s essay in this volume argues for a meta-cognitive interpretation of Kant’s aesthetic harmony that has some parallels with my meta-experiential approach. Nevertheless, Guyer classifies the harmony disclosed by my conception of the aesthetic imagination as being merely precognitive. Actually, I wrote in *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant* that “the aesthetic imagination is not limited to the preliminary precognitive functions often assigned it, but plays a role in reflective judgment’s systematic concern with knowledge in general” (1990, 66). Guyer rejects this link between the aesthetic imagination and systematic reflection by claiming that the aesthetic use of judgment is “entirely distinct” from the systematic use of reflecting judgment in the Introductions to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Guyer, footnote 16). To this I respond by pointing to Section VII of the Introduction, where Kant relates the aesthetic use of judgment to the more general reflecting uses of judgment. Thus, in the judgment of taste, “the object must be regarded as purposive for the reflecting power of judgment” (*Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ak 5:190; 77). Then in Section VIII we find an explicit link between aesthetic judgment and systematic reflection about nature: “In a critique of the power of judgment the part that contains the aesthetic power of judgment is essential, since this alone contains a principle that the power of judgment lays at the basis of its reflection on nature entirely *a priori*, namely, that of a formal purposiveness of nature in accordance with its particular (empirical) laws for our faculty of cognition” (Ak 5:193; 79). This purposiveness is what allows our understanding to systematize the laws of nature.

The fact that Kant places aesthetic pleasure “merely in the form of the object for reflection in general” (Ak 5:190; 77) indicates that the accordance that exists between the aesthetic imagination and “the way categories are generally schematized” (Makkreel 1990, 56) abstracts from reference to individual categories. It was never my view, *pace*

coordination to complete our experience and thus partly fill in the total system of experience that ideas of reason can only project abstractly. Being meta-experiential, reflective judgments about art are often parasitical on background determinant judgments. The most explicit example of a claim by Kant in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that involves the intersection of determinant and reflective judgment is not about art, but about the cultural context in which art functions. It is his assertion that man is the ultimate purpose (*letzter Zweck*) of nature because, as a cultural being, he can set himself final purposes (*Endzwecke*). The claim that human beings constitute an ultimate purpose is a teleological reflective judgment, but it is based on a determinant judgment of practical reason about their ability to establish themselves as final purposes.⁷⁰ I conclude from all this that whereas Kant defined a pure aesthetic judgment to be nonconceptual, most aesthetic judgments are at least in part conceptual. They may presuppose already familiar empirical concepts, as when we refer back to prejudices of taste, or more general concepts, as when we orient our judgment to exemplary models. Moreover, they may project aesthetic ideas that disclose affinities with rational ideas and can in turn suggest new concepts. Since we grow up with logical as well as aesthetic prejudices, it is unlikely that we ever confront the world without any concepts. They may be inadequate concepts, or mere representational concepts as found through the logical reflection discussed in Section 1 of this essay. This means that the so-called nonconceptual judgment of taste, “This rose is beautiful,” and the more generic judgment, “This flower is beautiful,” use vague representational concepts rather than determining concepts with the defining marks of things. And even when determining concepts do intrude into a judgment of taste, as in the more specific claim, “Hybrid Tea Roses are especially beautiful,”⁷¹ its cognitive content can be abstracted from or reflectively neutralized. Even botanists are able to suspend what they know about flowers in order to merely contemplate their form.

Guyer, that we think of causation as such or of a particular kind of causation when appreciating beauty. Yet aesthetic harmony can exhibit a felt analogue of causality, namely, the power to prolong itself. Aesthetic pleasure “has a causality in it, namely that of maintaining the state of the representation” (Ak 5:222, 107).

⁷⁰ See Makkreel (1990), 137–8.

⁷¹ This is how a rose catalog elaborates on the beauty of Hybrid Tea Roses: “These are the flowers we envision when the word ‘Rose’ is mentioned, and the image conjured up – that of large, elegant blooms with high centers and numerous, substantial petals – is a true one. Hybrid Teas usually produce one bloom per long stem. . . they will astound you with their beauty.” *The Complete Rose Catalog* (Hodges, SC: Wayside Gardens, 2003), 3.

The fact that reflective and determinant judgments can at times intersect does not mean that their functions merge. Indeed, I have argued that it is reflection rather than reflective judgment that can lead up to, and in that way merge with, determinant judgment. But even reflection as such is not about making objective determinations. Thus, if its results are to be used to contribute to our knowledge of the world, then the impetus will have to come from without. Neither reflection nor reflective judgment inherently subordinates itself to determinant judgment. On the contrary, reflective judgment, being orientational and interpretive, provides a more general framework for the more delimited claims of determinant judgment. It is because reflective judgment frames our experience that reflection by itself can precede as well as follow the making of determinant judgments. We have seen Kant use reflection both to lead up to concept formation and to suspend prejudices. Indeed, if reflection can raise questions about the premature determinations of prejudices, it should also be able to point to the limits of our capacity to attain mature determinations.

Understanding Aestheticized

Kirk Pillow

Many interpretations of Kant's first and third *Critiques* tend to treat these texts as at best tangentially related. Kant's distinction between determinative and reflective judgment – the former largely the purview of the *Critique of Pure Reason*'s Transcendental Analytic, the latter the subject of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* – invites a view of these mental acts as wholly distinct. Determination, after all, involves the subsumption of objects under concepts, while the reflective judgments of the third *Critique* appear to involve no determining concepts. Pure aesthetic judgments especially seem irrelevant to our conceptualizing efforts, for their basis lies in a certain kind of pleasure rather than in cognition. A healthy corrective to this tendency is provided by Beatrice Longuenesse in her *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (1998). Longuenesse makes a compelling case that reflection plays a role in empirical concept formation in all our acts of judging particulars determinatively. She argues that the “concepts of reflection” of the first *Critique* Amphiboly guide the generation of empirical concepts through the application of the logical forms of judgment to particulars. Reflecting on the particular to produce a universal under which to subsume it is then one aspect of determinative cognition. Even the categorial structure of experience, Longuenesse argues, is the outcome of acts of judgment with a fundamentally reflective origin.¹

Longuenesse weds the first *Critique* to the third *Critique* theme of reflection, however, by sharply contrasting a reflective aspect of cognition with the variety of “merely reflective” judgments that comprise the actual subject matter of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. On her reading of Kant,

¹ See Longuenesse (1998), Part Two, especially Chapter 6.

"every judgment of empirical objects as such is reflective," but also "determinative as well"; what distinguishes aesthetic and teleological judgments is not that they are reflective but that "they are *merely* reflective judgments, judgments in which reflection can never arrive at conceptual *determination*."² This means that Longuenesse secures a role for reflection in Kant's account of cognition only by setting aside aesthetic judgments as irrelevant to cognition. Because for Kant aesthetic reflection does not subsume particulars under determining concepts, the aesthetic again seemingly contributes nothing to our cognitive efforts. Mere aesthetic reflection has merely to do with pleasure, and so with subjective conditions rather than with making cognitive claims about matters of the object(ive). The result of Longuenesse's interpretation is the alignment of only a certain element of reflection with cognition such that the divide remains between the cognitive work of determinative understanding and the "merely" reflective play of aesthetic experience.

I wish to argue that this seeming irrelevance of the aesthetic to cognition is the result of an impoverished conception of cognition. While Kant places conceptualization and judgment at the heart of cognition and locates this activity in the individual subject, the range of twentieth-century epistemologies has provided us a richer picture of the operations of human cognition. Philosophers as varied as Kuhn and Davidson, Heidegger and Sellars have led us to see the context dependence of epistemic practices, the interpretive dimension of knowing, and the social or intersubjective nature of inquiry. Yet in most cases, this broadened conception of understanding has been advanced while still ignoring aesthetic experience and the insights of aesthetic theory, and largely maintaining the gap between the cognitive and the aesthetic upon which Kant's own account of determinative judgment relies. A notable exception to this tendency is the work of Nelson Goodman and Catherine Elgin, who have made aesthetic concerns central to their account of cognition or understanding. From Goodman's *Languages of Art* (1968) and *Ways of Worldmaking* (1978), to Elgin's *Considered Judgment* (1996), they have presented an ecumenical conception of knowing to which traditionally cognitive and aesthetic capacities and responses contribute equally. My aim here is to follow and draw upon their example by expanding the Kantian conception of 'understanding', to include in it what he excludes from it through his sharp distinction between determinative judgment and aesthetic reflective judgment.

² Ibid., 164.

I will contrast Kant's conception of cognition as the recognition of objects under concepts with Goodman and Elgin's more nuanced conception of understanding. Understanding in their sense accommodates a variety of interpretive practices traditionally relegated to the sphere of the mere aesthetic. This broadened (and more compelling) conception of understanding will allow us to see that central features of Kant's aesthetic theory, especially his theory of the aesthetic idea, contribute to the satisfactory characterization of understanding thus broadened. Furthermore, reading Kant in this way will allow us to make use of his analysis of the judgment of taste in an account of how we assess the cognitive claims of an interpretive understanding. Conceiving understanding broadly as inclusive of both cognitive and aesthetic dimensions will provide a critical perspective on the divide between aesthetic and cognitive judgments in Kant's thought, but will also remind us that Kant opens the way to recognizing human understanding as an interpretive endeavor. As we will see, however, a requirement of this reading of Kant will be the rejection of one of the more implausible features of his aesthetic theory: the strict requirement of aesthetic disinterestedness.

Concepts for Kant function as rules for determining which objects fall under them, that is, which objects possess the properties marked by the predicates of the concept. Understanding is the source of conceptual rules (empirical and categorial), and judgment is the capacity for subsuming particulars under these rules.³ Determinative judgment, which, following Longuenesse, I read as inclusive of reflective empirical concept formation, is the "art" both of bringing particulars to appropriate, established concepts and of inventing concepts that generalize the features of the previously ill-conceived particular. Kant regards these capacities as the core of cognition and practically identifies understanding with such judgment: "We can . . . trace all actions of the understanding back to judgments, so that the understanding in general can be represented as a faculty for judging" (A69/B94). Indeed, the view defended by Longuenesse and others, that reflective judgment plays a role in empirical concept formation, strengthens the identification of understanding with judgment, for it makes judgment essential to the acts of understanding in which conceptual rules are produced for use in cognizing particulars in determinative judgments. All cognition of objects for Kant comes down to

³ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A132/B171. Subsequent references will provide A/B pagination in the body of the text. See also the First Introduction to the Critique of the Power of Judgment, in Kant (2000), 8 (Ak 20:201).

acts of judgment in which we apply established concepts or reflectively produce concepts that provide new ways of determining the objects.

Yet these capacities for conceptual subsumption are but one element of the more sophisticated conception of understanding articulated by Goodman and Elgin. They conceive understanding as the perpetual effort to make coherent sense of things in ways that advance pursuit of our goals and help us to imagine new ones. Understanding so construed, as Elgin writes, “is more comprehensive than knowledge ever hoped to be. We understand rules and reasons, actions and passions, objectives and obstacles, techniques and tools, forms, functions, and fictions, as well as facts.”⁴ This broad understanding employs myriad epistemic techniques, such as those described by Goodman as “ways of worldmaking,” that include but go beyond the acts of conceptual subsumption to which Kant reduced cognition. We not only categorize objects through our concepts; we also advance understanding by weighing the relevance of various judgments for different explanatory purposes, or by ordering findings variously for different practical or expressive aims.⁵ For Goodman and Elgin, judgments of Kant’s determinative sort are not the only constituents of cognition; they are but one of many devices through which we seek understanding.

Understanding in their broader sense is both coherentist and interpretive. As coherentist, understanding makes claims that depend for their meaning and referential power on their position in a larger whole of established claims. Understanding is guided by the regulative goal of ordering hypotheses and findings into consistent systems of thought, which means that one measure of the validity of new claims is how well they cohere with what we already hold firmly. Claims that cannot be squared with our cognitive commitments are unlikely to take root unless further inquiry reveals advantages to adopting the claim sufficient to warrant the reconfiguration or rejection of other beliefs. Understanding is thus constrained in its claims by a history of cognitive commitments, many of which we would be unlikely to revise or reject. This means that the mere coherence or internal consistency of a set of claims is insufficient to assure their contribution to understanding, because the claims must fit into the broader network of our established convictions if they

⁴ Elgin (1996), 123.

⁵ Goodman (1978), Chapter 1. In what follows, I will focus primarily on Catherine Elgin’s more recent refinements of the position that Goodman and she have somewhat differently developed.

are to compel. Through the ordering of claims into coherent wholes, and through the assessment of them in light of given cognitive commitments, understanding moves in and out of what Elgin calls (developing terminology of Rawls's) "reflective equilibrium." In a system of cognitive commitments in reflective equilibrium, the various components are "reasonable in light of one another," but the whole is also "reasonable in light of our initially tenable commitments," those convictions that understanding has already endorsed (*CJ* 107). Understanding is a perpetual process of revising convictions to maximize tenability, where tenability is judged not with reference to any absolute standard but with reference to a history of advancements of understanding to which we are committed. These commitments to the already understood are not absolute either, however, because new claims can potentially unseat even deeply held positions. "A cognitive system is not a static framework of firmly established findings," Elgin writes; "it is a dynamic body of provisional commitments, continually being tested by its capacity to nurture understanding" (1996, 134).

Understanding as the search for reflective equilibrium is essentially a historicized and coherentist version of the Kantian reflective process of concept formation, though the means for achieving this equilibrium are not limited to the subsumption of objects under concepts. Even for Kant, reflection on nature involves more than just conceptualizing objects. In both the first and the third *Critiques* judgment is guided by the reflective and regulative ideal of ordering our cognition of nature into a system. As Kant argues in the First Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, the sheer empirical diversity of physical laws and organic forms discovered in nature can hardly be accounted for by the bare categorial structures the mind contributes to the unity of experience. We must suppose, Kant holds, that this natural diversity coheres as a unity, of a sort imaginable for nature if we treat it as if it were a product of intelligence. We understand nature, therefore, not only by constitutively cognizing its objects under determining concepts, but also by regulatively ordering its parts into a system. Reflective judgment and reason cooperate in this effort. Reflective judgment provides the principle of purposiveness that entitles us to construe nature regulatively as a system. Reflective judgment employs "a principle of the representation of nature as a system for our power of judgment, divided into genera and species, [which] makes it possible to bring all the natural forms that are forthcoming to concepts . . . through comparison."⁶

⁶ First Introduction, in Kant (2000), 15–16n (Ak 20:212).

Reason, on the other hand, provides the form of systematicity that nature is expected to fulfill. The regulative principles of homogeneity, specification, and continuity that Kant presents in the first *Critique*, which are to guide our systematization of nature, are designed to order the conceptual rules of understanding into a Linnaean taxonomy of natural forms. Kant writes:

Reason thus prepares the field for the understanding: 1. by a principle of sameness of kind in the manifold under higher genera; 2. by a principle of the variety of what is same in kind under lower species; and in order to complete the systematic unity it adds 3. by still another law of the affinity of all concepts, which offers a continuous transition from every species to every other through a graduated increase of varieties. We can call these the principles of the homogeneity, specification, and continuity of forms.⁷

Because reason's goal is to bring order to the understanding's rule for cognizing nature, Kant construes the system of nature as a hierarchical pyramid of genus-species relations among concepts. However, aside from appearing to commit Kant to a problematic endorsement of "natural kinds,"⁸ the resultant unity brought to our experience is much too narrow. These principles provide only for a systematic classification of nature. They obscure the myriad ways in which our sense of things hangs together less systematically and hierarchically, as well as the myriad ways in which our sense of things is dynamic, variable, and historical. Even if Kant locates in reason capacities for making regulative sense of nature above and beyond the transcendental and empirical categorizations of 'understanding' in his technical sense, the resultant construal of nature is inadequate to the true complexity and flexibility of our broader powers of understanding.

Reflective understanding of Elgin's sort pursues a less rigid and classificatory comprehension of how things are. Understanding in the broader sense in which I am contrasting it with Kant strives for coherence in this sense: the ad hoc and historically sedimented unity of a web of belief. It seeks reflective equilibrium among the whole network of our cognitive commitments, and its building blocks are not elements in a taxonomy but

⁷ See the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, "On the Regulative Use of the Ideas of Pure Reason," A657–8/B685–6.

⁸ Henry Allison observes the dependence of empirical concept formation on the supposition of a system of conceptual genera-species relations, and suggests that the goal of the Kantian systematizer of nature is a taxonomy that "carves nature at its joints." See Allison (2001), 32–4. Allison does not consider the plausibility of a metaphysical commitment to natural kinds. See also Allison (2000), 81–5.

convictions in a history of inquiry. The goal of understanding is not one unified hierarchy of categories. Rather, the development and application of multiple and potentially inconsistent category schemes is but one tool for understanding broadly construed, and our categories are evaluated not in terms of their correspondence to some antecedent order of objects, but in terms of their contribution to the cultivation of reflective equilibrium in our whole understanding. The merits of a category scheme, Elgin writes, “depend on its utility, an effective scheme being one whose organization of its realm suits our purposes. Rightness of categorization thus consists neither in blind fidelity to tradition nor in accord with an antecedent metaphysical order, but in meshing with other tenable commitments to promote tenable ends” (1996, 105). The point of devising category schemes is not simply to organize things; the point is to invest different things differently with the significances they have for us in the context of our various needs and goals.

This indicates that understanding thus broadened is not only coherentist but also interpretive. Understanding amounts to more than identifying objects as instantiated collections of properties that match the predicates contained in a concept. Interpretive understanding construes objects, events, people, and abstract entities as rich deposits of contextualized meaning and strives to make sense of them comprehensively. Understanding a particular artifact, for example, requires knowing not only what it is for, but also who designed it and what its production history is, whether it is owned and who owns it, how it compares to other artifacts of its kind, what symbolic meanings it might have personally and socially, and so on (although any, all, or none of these things might matter for various purposes). Such understanding does not merely categorize but also construes things through symbols, metaphors, narratives, and other seeing-as devices in order to produce comprehensive perspectives on their meanings, “even when [these devices] do not augment our stock of literal truths” (Elgin 1996, 170). Through what Goodman and Elgin have called “exemplification,” for example, understanding draws attention to specific attributes of things, not in order merely to conceptualize the properties of objects, but to highlight features of things for multiple organizational and communicative purposes.⁹ Just as this broad understanding countenances multiple category schemes for different ends, it also welcomes the possibility of multiple right interpretations of a given object, and selects among interpretations depending

⁹ See Goodman (1968), 52–67, and Elgin, *CJ* 171–83.

on its current aims. Producing interpretations involves not merely subsuming objects under concepts but also ordering systems of judgments into convincing narratives or compelling unpacking and repackaging of meanings.

Interpretive understanding also extends meanings by continually making new connections between domains of inquiry, and it does so frequently by means of metaphor. Striking new metaphors reinterpret things in ways that often require reconfiguration or rejection of previously held commitments. Metaphorical meaning is typically construed as inexhaustible, or at least not subject to paraphrase. One reason for this is that metaphors link different spheres of cognitive commitment so as to invite ongoing reconsideration of meanings (and so also possibilities for reference) in both domains. The coherentist nature of interpretive understanding renders restructuring of meanings in one area strongly advisable for consideration of revisions elsewhere, and the inexhaustibility of metaphorical meaning reflects this reverberation that the successful metaphor causes in the spheres of belief between which it transfers meanings. Successful metaphors also transgress the conventional rules of application of our concepts, and so invite new patterns of judgment that produce fresh understanding, despite their literal falsity and their transgression of conventional categorizations.

To summarize, understanding in the broad sense is the interpretive ordering of experience into meaningful wholes, with reflective empirical concept formation but one element of this effort.

Now I want to propose that Kant's conception of the aesthetic idea is the exemplar in his thought of this kind of understanding. Aesthetic ideas are the fruit of a productive imagination that creates, "as it were, another nature, out of the material which the real one gives it."¹⁰ Kant first characterizes an aesthetic idea as "[a] representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., concept, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible" (*CPJ* 192). No rule for conceptual subsumption can determine an aesthetic idea because the content of such an "idea" is not a collection of predicates characterizing the properties of some set of objects. Yet the "indeterminacy" of an aesthetic idea does not render it an incoherent train of associations; if this were so, it would amount only to the "original nonsense"

¹⁰ *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 192. Subsequent references will be provided parenthetically in the body of the text, using the abbreviation *CPJ*.

of Kant's failed genius (*CPJ* 186).¹¹ An aesthetic idea is an imaginative ordering of what Kant calls "aesthetic attributes," the arrangement of which provide "unsought extensive undeveloped material for the understanding" (*CPJ* 194). The aesthetic idea surpasses what understanding provides conceptually because through it imagination seeks to emulate reason by expressing an experiential whole (*CPJ* 192–3). The imaginative ordering of aesthetic attributes into meaningful wholes has the aim of expressing perspectives on experience, unifying perspectives that surpass the conceptualization of objects. As Rudolf Makkreel and others have recognized, the aesthetic idea is the template for creative interpretation in Kant's aesthetic theory.¹² Interpreting is a matter of conveying a perspective through the ordering of parts into a communicative whole. Hence it is through the notion of aesthetic ideas that Kant theorizes imaginative expression as an interpretative supplement to conceptual understanding. It supplements conceptual cognition because it goes beyond the categorization of objects to (try to) comprehend complex contextual meanings. I noted earlier that metaphorical expression is frequently credited to an interpretive understanding, and it is no accident that many commentators have identified a theory of metaphor in Kant's account of the aesthetic idea.¹³

Now for Kant, aesthetic ideas are the products of artistic genius. Through them the artist seeks to express "a multitude of related representations" (*CPJ* 193), and the insight of the genius is to bring these attributes into a relation that expresses a compelling perspective. Kant theorizes aesthetic ideas specifically as the expressed content of works of art, but I propose seeing them as the imaginative products of interpretive understanding generally, throughout its contributions to our cognitive endeavors. The kind of interpretive expansion of thought exemplified by Kant's aesthetic idea is hardly limited to our encounters with art; it is central to understanding as conceived by Goodman and Elgin. Seeing the aesthetic idea in this light has the consequence of rendering cognition continuous with artistic production, a salutary result for Goodman and Elgin, both of whom embrace the cognitive efficacy of art, and the creative dimension of cognition; understanding in the broad

¹¹ See Allison (2001), 283–4.

¹² Makkreel (1990), especially 118–29. Makkreel holds that aesthetic ideas "allow us to arrive at a reflective interpretation of things that surpass nature" (129). See also my *Sublime Understanding: Aesthetic Reflection in Kant and Hegel* (2000) for discussion of the literature on this topic.

¹³ For discussion of the relevant literature, see Pillow (2001).

sense that they endorse is inherently imaginative (Elgin 1996, 170–1).¹⁴ Kant locates the communication of genius in art works specifically, but seeing aesthetic ideas as the fruits of interpretive understanding allows us to recognize the ingenuity of understanding throughout its efforts to make coherent and compelling sense of things. Understood in this way, “genius” is the capacity to communicate a broad and deep understanding of something.¹⁵ Henry Allison has noted “an interesting and perhaps unexpected parallel between genius and judgment” (Allison 2001, 286). The genius is able to sense the expressive aptness of the aesthetic ideas she creates, without the guidance of a determinate rule. The parallel is that Kant construes judgment too as something for which no rule can be given and so as a talent that cannot be taught: One must be able just to see that a given object falls under a given concept (A133–4/B172–4). I suggest that there is more than a parallel here, and that a deep connection between judgment and Kantian genius is to be expected. In contrast to Kant, judgment in the broad interpretive sense that I am advocating does not merely conceptualize particulars; it seeks to understand whole contexts rich with meaning. Rich expressions of meaning are, of course, the goal of Kant’s artistic genius, and to express aptly, she must also be able to judge the aptness of her understanding of things. A cultivated talent for understanding richly (judgment) and a talent for apt expression (genius) are sides of the same coin (which is not to say that both sides of this coin shine equally in everyone). Judging the outcomes of interpretive understanding, furthermore, requires an ingenuity of its own, a point to which I will return later.

Understanding conceived less narrowly than Kant conceived it requires no sharp divide between the aesthetic and the cognitive. Despite the divide between determinative conceptual judgment and “merely reflective” judgment retained by Longuenesse, we have seen that the theory of expression contained in Kant’s conception of the aesthetic idea

¹⁴ See also Goodman (1968), 225–65.

¹⁵ One of many problems with the romantic cult of artistic genius to which Kant contributed is that it obscures the creativity of everyday interpretive understanding by restricting ‘true’ creativity to a mysterious few. Profound genius is not required for understanding in the everyday (though aestheticized) sense; genius is required only for superlative feats of understanding. Another problem with that cult is that it unduly restricts genius to artists while denying it to the scientist because all of her knowledge is conceptually determinate (*CPJ* 187–8). If we admit an interpretive dimension into understanding generally, and if in particular we allow that good science involves much more than establishing empirical laws or specifying taxonomies, but also requires “seeing the big picture,” then the Kantian gap between artistic genius and scientific talent closes somewhat.

embodies the kind of interpretive understanding Goodman and Elgin recommend. Understanding satisfactorily conceived encompasses interpretive capacities traditionally misconstrued as “merely aesthetic” modes of response, and understanding broadly conceived encompasses in particular the capacities for rich expression that Kant locates in our having an imagination for aesthetic ideas. We may ask, then, how to regard Kant’s theory of aesthetic experience in light of this. The question is: What can Kant’s *Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment* tell us about the kind of understanding expressed through aesthetic ideas?

More specifically, what sort of normative force does Kant’s *Analytic* suggest that the products of interpretive understanding have? How do we judge whether this understanding gets anything right? One difficulty with addressing this matter is that understanding in the broad sense is creatively interpretive, while Kant’s aesthetic theory is largely a ‘reception’ theory meant to characterize how we judge things to be beautiful and how we respond evaluatively to aesthetic ideas. So his aesthetic theory could not provide an account of how we exercise our capacity to understand things interpretively, other than through the already discussed and scant details of his notion of the aesthetic idea. But once understanding is broadened to encompass narrowly cognitive and widely creative means of knowing, and the aesthetic idea becomes exemplary of interpretive efforts at understanding, Kant’s *Analytic* can be seen as an account of how we assess the productions of such an understanding. What I propose then to do is interpret the four moments of Kant’s *Analytic of the Beautiful* as a partial guide to our assessment of the claims of understanding broadly construed.¹⁶

For Kant, aesthetic judgments (1) are noncognitive and disinterested; (2) express a universal voice; (3) attend to the purposiveness of form; and (4) appeal to a common sense for their necessity. We may see the first and third features as largely descriptive of this kind of judgment (though I reserve discussion of disinterestedness for later). With regard to the first moment, aesthetic reflective judgments are not determinative;

¹⁶ I say “partial” because later I will relate features of Kant’s account of aesthetic normativity to features of Goodman and Elgin’s own standards of cognitive normativity in order to provide an adequate picture. Note also that I focus here exclusively on Kant’s judgment of taste and do not consider the judgment of sublimity. I have argued elsewhere that reflection on aesthetic ideas can be best understood through Kant’s account of judging the (mathematical) sublime; see *Sublime Understanding*, especially Chapter 3. Here I leave those arguments aside in the interest of economy and work from the typical position in the literature that the response to aesthetic ideas is a judgment of taste.

they establish nothing about the objective properties of objects. They do not involve the subsumption of objects under empirical concepts, for aesthetic experience is marked by a free interaction between imagination and understanding rather than the legislative relation in which understanding's provision of conceptual rules guides imagination's synthesis of the object (*CPJ* 44). But the noncognitive nature of aesthetic judgment cannot imply that our response to aesthetic ideas is entirely devoid of conceptual content, because the various attributes of an aesthetic idea are conceptually replete. These attributes must be thought through the various concepts that characterize them in order to be ordered into an expressive whole. In Kant's own example (*CPJ* 193), the lightning in the claws of Jupiter's eagle must be conceptualized as lightning in order to be taken into account in any interpretation of the image. What is distinctive about aesthetic experience is not the utter absence of concepts in our reflection on an object; such a complete absence is unintelligible in any case. Instead, aesthetic experience is distinguished from cognition narrowly construed by the fact that our response to the object is not to subsume it under a conceptual rule. Our aesthetic response instead plays at multiple ways of appreciating a form and, in the case of works of art, at multiple ways of construing meanings, rather than settling on any reductive conceptual determination. To be interpretive, our response to aesthetic ideas must draw on concepts, and this is consistent with that response being noncognitive in the narrow sense, because interpreting aesthetic ideas entails more than subsuming properties of objects under predicates of concepts. Interpretive understanding is not governed by determinative conceptual rules, but it does employ conceptual resources while working to make sense of its object.

There has, of course, been much controversy regarding how to understand the third moment of Kant's *Analytic* and the extent to which it commits him to a restrictively formalistic conception of aesthetic response. The judgment of taste is for Kant directed toward the "form of purposiveness" and appears to seek out this "purposiveness" in the "form" of an object of reflection (*CPJ* 105–11). Rather than enter into the complex debate over these phrases, I suggest what I hope is a plausible reading of Kant's view. Reflective judgment generally looks for purposiveness in things, and this purposiveness can be understood as the appearance of order and design that appears to suggest the work of intelligence. The appearance of such design in nature is in turn purposive for our comprehension of nature as a systematic unity, Kant holds, because it suggests that nature is amenable to such comprehension (however incomplete

that comprehension must remain), in virtue of the fact that such a unity in nature is imaginable to Kant only on the supposition of intelligent design. This construal of nature remains merely regulative for Kant, because regarding nature as purposive does not entail that we cognize it in accordance with some determining purpose, as is the case in cognition of actual artifacts. In the case of aesthetic reflection, we judge “purposiveness without purpose” when we respond to the beautiful order or design of something without cognizing it according to some specific purpose. For Kant, knowing the purpose of an object requires subsuming it under a conceptual rule, and because aesthetic response is not cognitive in the narrow sense, it does not cognize purposes. I think we can then say that attending to the purposiveness of an aesthetic idea amounts to assessing the “design” of what it expresses, that is, to interpreting its meaning. Because making sense of aesthetic ideas does not involve ascribing a determinate purpose to them, the response to them is not a matter of fixing their producer’s expressive intent, but rather of advancing plausible (coherent and compelling) construals of their meaning. Interpreting aesthetic ideas means making sense of them as expressive wholes, which is something quite different from deciding a conceptual rule under which to categorize an object; so again, this interpreting, like the creation of them, is noncognitive in Kant’s narrow sense of cognition. In other words, responding to aesthetic ideas exercises the same efforts of interpretive understanding that went into creating them. Here again, the proximity of genius and judgment is evident.

The universal voice of the judgment of taste (second moment), along with the role of a *sensus communis* in securing its claim to necessity (fourth moment), concern the normativity of aesthetic response in Kant’s theory. They concern whether one’s aesthetic judgment can make any claim on the judgment of others. For my purposes, Kant’s conception of aesthetic normativity can illuminate how we assess the normative force of cognitive claims in the broad interpretive sense at issue here. I propose approaching the matter first from the vantage point of Goodman and Elgin’s own accounts of cognitive normativity. Doing so will allow us then to see the cognitive relevance of Kant’s account of aesthetic normativity, so long as cognition is allowed its creatively interpretive dimension.

For the constructivist account of knowing advanced by Goodman and refined by Elgin, “truth” is hardly the only or even the highest cognitive value. As they point out, there is no limit to the number of insignificant truths out there, including, for example, the precise number of letters on this page. The irrelevance of such truths renders them “alien to our

cognitive commitments" (Elgin 1996, 124). Now, which truths matter depends on context, and even the number of letters on this page might matter to a compositor. Because salience is more cognitively central than truth, any claim whose truth we would trouble ourselves to assert must have significance in some context or other. Many claims simply have little or no significance in many contexts. Furthermore, there may be truths so complicated that their "assimilation into a tenable system would subvert other cognitive objectives" (*ibid.*). Sometimes a strictly false simplification or a mere estimate of a numerical value serves understanding better. Moreover, all manner of cognitive systems, including scientific ones, embrace literal falsehoods when it is efficacious to do so. This occurs each time, for example, that a salient metaphor structures a domain of inquiry or affects the evaluation of particular findings. More significant than mere truth for Goodman and Elgin is what they sometimes call "rightness of fit": Claims have merit when they coordinate well with our prior commitments, either by supplementing them or by requiring worthwhile revisions to them. New claims can be fitting or apt, and hence worth adopting, when the reconfiguration or rejection of some prior commitments that they require appears warranted by the benefits of reconceiving something to make for a new fit. Fitting claims can be grafted into belief systems without permanently undermining their reflective equilibrium, and are worth the trouble when they afford new insight. All such cognitive work is the key to understanding for Goodman: On his view, "knowing or understanding is seen as ranging beyond the acquiring of true beliefs to the discovering and devising of fit of all sorts" (Goodman 1978, 138). Pragmatic considerations also play a central role in the evaluation of cognitive claims: What we commit to cognitively depends on what fits with our interests and pursuits; but, just as importantly, prudent understanding requires that we assess the fittingness of those interests and pursuits themselves.

The constructivism that Goodman and Elgin advocate rejects the correspondence theory of truth and the metaphysics usually associated with it. Understanding is not a matter of lining oneself up with a way things already are; understanding instead involves interacting with the world, and construing the world along with others, in ways that make the world an artifact of how we interpret it. Because "any structure reality may have is imposed by a system that is informed by interests, objectives, and standards," Elgin argues, "what truths there are is a function of what systems we construct" (1996, 141). The "we" is crucial here, because the kind of understanding Elgin describes is necessarily social in orientation. Because

we cannot appeal to a given way-the-world-is-in-itself to justify our cognitive claims, the appeal that interpretive understanding makes is instead directed to others on the basis of their shared convictions. The advocate of a particular cognitive claim makes a case for its value by attempting to convince others that it gets something right about the world, but this world itself is the interpreted outcome of the cognitive commitments already endorsed and shared (implicitly or explicitly) by the advocate and her audience. She looks to others for endorsement of her take on things, and those “things” are themselves the results of shared efforts at understanding. Moreover, the validity of her claims depends on whether others adopt them and integrate the new insights into the edifice of the already understood. Her claims are epistemically validated and take on normative weight when collective assessment of them integrates them into our stock of tenable commitments.

This hardly implies that just any claim can be “made true” simply by individual or collective fiat. Whether a claim makes a lasting contribution to our understanding of things depends on many factors, including how well it coheres with what we already believe unswervingly and whether it serves our interests in the long run. Many claims are simply incompatible with our unrevised commitments and do not warrant disruption of what reflective equilibrium we have achieved. But systems in reflective equilibrium are themselves the hard-won products of collective labor; they embody and reflect a history of shared human interests and goals. Understanding in the broad sense is shared across communities whose communality is a function of shared commitments. In sum, we can make a case for the aptness of some construal of things only through appeal to others with whom we already share a common store of cognitive commitments. Only on the basis of that shared sense of things can the advocate of some new claim hope to win the agreement of others.

Now I want to suggest that this feature of the normativity of interpretive understanding is embodied in the *sensus communis* of the fourth moment of Kant’s *Analytic*. Kant holds that “the should in aesthetic judgments of taste is . . . pronounced only conditionally” because this ought relies on the presupposition of a common sense (*CPJ* 121). As with most of Kant’s aesthetic doctrines, there is much debate over how to understand this; I propose what is a fairly standard reading.¹⁷ Several of Kant’s remarks in the fourth moment strongly suggest that the shared sense in question is simply the feeling of pleasure associated with the harmonious play of

¹⁷ See Allison (2001), 144–55, for a quite different interpretation.

imagination and understanding distinctive of aesthetic experience. The *sensus communis* might otherwise be identified with that harmonious play itself. Either way, Kant's thought is that only on the basis of this universally shared and sharable relation of cognitive powers can we insist that others share our aesthetic judgment, and only so long as that common sense in fact underlies the particular judgment of taste (thereby making it a pure judgment of taste) in which one expects agreement from others. This common sense then makes possible aesthetic normativity in Kant's theory, much in the way that a collective system of cognitive commitments undergirds the normative force of interpretive understanding's new claims. Making a case for one's claims, whether aesthetic or cognitive, requires making appeal to what we already agree upon; without this background of shared agreement we have no claim on each other. Simply put, the potential normative force of the products of interpretive understanding rests on already shared understandings. Kant's notion of an aesthetic common sense exemplifies this kind of basis for normativity, in particular because it does not rely on a determinate conceptual rule. The underpinning of interpretive understanding is not finally a structure of concepts but a shared *sense* of how things hold together and make sense as a whole.

Kant, of course, wants a transcendental justification of this shared sense, which would be both unavailable to and undesirable for the interpretive understanding Goodman and Elgin advocate. A shared sense of things indeed underlies the potential normative force of understanding's claims, but its basis is a contingent history of shared convictions rather than some necessary structural feature of cognition.¹⁸ Hence the advocate of understanding in the historicized, coherentist, and interpretive sense will inevitably be drawn to the infamous second paragraph of §22 of the third *Critique*, where Kant raises the untimely question of whether the *sensus communis* might be "acquired and artificial" rather than "original and natural" (*CPJ* 124). If it were the former, the common sense could easily be understood as an internal principle of the collective search for reflective equilibrium: Our shared efforts at understanding require us to seek maximal agreement on what cognitive commitments will for now condition our continued inquiries. And whatever shared sense of things underlies our latest efforts at claims-making is itself the outcome of long histories of seeking mutual agreement about how to understand things. Kant would seem to need the

¹⁸ Or one could argue more strongly, and at odds with Kant, that a contingent history of shared convictions *is* a structural requirement of cognition.

sensus communis to be the latter, however, and indeed in Kant's epistemology a free relation among cognitive powers would be "natural." Kant's notorious deferral of an answer to this question has invited various interpretations of the passage, including many that direct the common sense toward realization of the moral law, strengthening the ties between aesthetic and moral judgment in Kant's thought. In any case, the possibility of a progressive cultivation of shared judgment that Kant raises here helps us to recognize understanding as a history of crafting shared commitments, so long as one sees the common sense as underpinning not only aesthetic judgments but our interpretive efforts generally.

I have applied Kant's *Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment* to assessment of the products of an interpretive understanding. We have seen that its "aesthetic ideas" compel – that is, they have normative force – when they provide a coherent and compelling ordering of some features of experience, an ordering that fits with established commitments and helps satisfy established cognitive and practical interests. The shared commitments understanding has already achieved provide the basis from which we make claims for the normativity of new potential insights. The expression of understanding through aesthetic ideas, and the normative grounding of aesthetic ideas in a common sense, show that the aesthetic dimension of Kant's thought provides resources for articulating the "art of judgment" practiced by cognitive agents who interpret the world richly and do not merely subsume objects under concepts. We practice this artistry both when we advance new interpretations and when we evaluate the proposals of others. Our evaluations respond to demands for agreement made upon us, and seen in this light, what Kant calls "taste" can be understood as skill at judging the work of understanding. While separating the aesthetic and cognitive dimensions of understanding entails specifying a distinctive taste peculiar to aesthetic normativity, integrating them results in judgments that make taste an integral element of both practicing and assessing an interpretive understanding. That is, the taste integral to understanding in the broad sense is a cultivated talent for interpreting and for recognizing the relative aptness and insightfulness of interpretations. As seen earlier, this again shows genius and judgment to be paired concepts; ingenuity is required to advance understanding, but also to exercise the judgment through which we assess its claims.¹⁹

¹⁹ In one of his discussions of the relation between genius and taste, Kant holds that imagination, understanding, and spirit (the animating principle of artistic genius) are all united in taste, which is to say sound aesthetic judgment; see *CPJ* §50, 196–7.

Yet, while interpretive understanding relies on a common sense of things, we have seen that the cognitive value of its claims depends in part on pragmatic considerations tied to the variety of human interests. For this reason, assessment of its products cannot be divorced from those interests and cannot be undertaken from any purely disinterested point of view. In this respect, then, how we assess the output of a broad understanding is squarely at odds with the requirement of disinterestedness that Kant makes fundamental to the pure judgment of taste in the first moment of his *Analytic*. The Kantian aesthetic judge's complete indifference to the existence of the object of her reflection (*CPJ* 90–1), her unconcern for what could be done with or gained from it, is incompatible with how we decide whether to embrace new cognitive commitments. Our reasons for embracing cognitive claims always reflect human interests; to require pure disinterestedness from interpretive understanding would be self-defeating.

This nevertheless leaves room for a weaker sense in which our judgment of new cognitive claims should be unprejudiced. That is, new claims should be assessed with an open mind, in a critically self-aware manner that does not stack the deck against them in advance. Not only is there room for an open mind; such fairness in judgment is required of an interpretive understanding, for this requirement is in fact built into the pursuit of reflective equilibrium. Understanding cannot be maintained statically but must always be prepared to give due consideration to insights that shake the epistemic status quo. "Forced to concede fallibility," Elgin writes, an interpretive understanding "incorporates devices for reviewing accepted commitments and correcting or rejecting them should errors emerge" (1996, 132). Due consideration of whether to accept or reject specific claims requires open-mindedness, but not disinterestedness of Kant's pure aesthetic sort.

The normativity of interpretive understanding cannot depend on a purely disinterested evaluation of its products, and so this reading of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment cannot accommodate the proposed disinterestedness of his pure judgment of taste. One might hold that the aesthetic dimension of human understanding can only be impure, motivated indeed by specific interests, but attempt to preserve Kant's judgment of taste in some noncognitive realm of pure aestheticism. But there is little reason to imagine that such a land of untrammelled aesthetic value actually exists and little reason to wish for it. Few philosophers working in the field of aesthetics today, and even fewer art-critical practitioners in our arts institutions, take strict disinterestedness seriously as a requirement

of cultivated aesthetic judgment. They would allow that taste is stunted when made merely the lapdog of unreflective prejudice, and they would encourage us to approach new work with an open mind. But they would reject the quite implausible notion that we are somehow to set aside the interests that make us who we are when we enter the hallowed sphere of art. There is in fact little relation between taste as it is cultivated by reasonable people today and the disinterestedness requirement of classical German aesthetic theory. Indeed, the aesthetic autonomy tenet that motivated the pure aestheticism of the now-dated German aesthetic theories of the avant-garde has little bearing on the practices of contemporary art and art criticism. To advocate disinterested aestheticism today is to betray a willful ignorance of what artists are making and of how critics are reasonably responding.

The requirement of pure disinterestedness lodged in Kant's aesthetic theory has hindered recognition of the relevance of his account of aesthetic judgment to the interpretive dimension of human cognition. The aesthetic disinterestedness requirement hinders this recognition because interpretive understanding represents our interests through and through. My goal here has been to propose that Kant helps us see the way to a unification of the cognitive and the aesthetic, so long as we understand cognition more richly than as conceptual subsumption and so long as we are not tempted by the chimera of pure aesthetic disinterest. But on most accounts of Kant's aesthetic theory, the disinterestedness of taste is essential to grounding its "universal voice." Kant holds that it is because your aesthetic judgment is not conditioned upon any private interest that you are entitled to claim that others ought to share your judgment (*CPJ* 96–7). Impure judgments of taste void their claim to universality because they are based on private conditions, that is, they are merely judgments of sense. In order to see how one can preserve a normative force for aesthetic judgment without depending on a condition of disinterest, I propose that we should reconsider, along lines already surveyed, the sort of universality that we should expect from aesthetic judgment. Doing so can provide a practicable account of the potential normativity of its deliverances, and so also, then, of the claims of interpretive understanding.

Advocates of aesthetic and cognitive claims appeal to a background of aesthetic and cognitive commitments already shared with those to whom the claims are made. Only by appeal to this shared sense of how things are (and what is aesthetically valuable) can we make a demand on others to recognize the rightness of a new claim. Only having already agreed on many things (implicitly or explicitly) can we demand that others agree

with something more, such as the insightfulness of a particular artist's work or the rightness of some construal of empirical evidence. But this means, as we have seen, that the claims of interpretive understanding are only *conditionally* valid (when valid at all): *If* we share this sense of how things are, *then* you may insist that I agree with your judgment of an artist, because that should be my judgment also. *Given* a shared basis of aesthetic and cognitive commitments and interests (a basis itself the outcome of prior reflective commitments), judgments can have normative force among all those who share that basis sufficiently. But the judgments in which we evaluate the claims of an interpretive understanding cannot have universal necessity, nor can any of the claims themselves, because what normativity they do have rests on empirically and historically contingent aspects of the reflective equilibrium at which we happen to have arrived. Their normativity is restricted by the bounds of the community of inquirers to which the claim is addressed. I suggest that we call this limited normativity a 'localized universality'. The claims of interpretive understanding, and our assessments of those claims, can demand agreement only from those (however few or many) who share the commitments that invited and accommodated such new claims and judgments in the first place.

This conclusion carries us well away from Kant's own epistemological commitments, of course. Fundamental cognitive and moral judgments are unconditionally necessary for Kant, because they have a basis in categorical and categorial features of rationality. And while for Kant aesthetic judgment is conditional, because it presupposes a common sense, this condition is nevertheless conceived as an *a priori* cognitive structure, thus supposedly preserving the universality and necessity of the judgment. But the quest for universality and necessity at the heart of Kant's thought can only be joined by ignoring the myriad philosophical realizations of the twentieth century that place such a pursuit in question. The compelling challenges to the analytic–synthetic distinction, the unraveling of the distinction between scheme and content, as well as the distinction between fact and value, the integration of emotion into cognition, and the neo-pragmatist reconception of knowing make transcendental idealism a hard pill to swallow. I think it better to recognize the extent to which Kant's great efforts to place distinct aesthetic and cognitive experiences into an architectonic whole paved the way for the collapse of this sharp distinction as well. Understanding, loosed from the narrow task of generating and applying conceptual rules, strives to make sense of how things hang together – and does so with an interpretive finesse

and a felt sense for things erroneously relegated, by our tradition, to the province of aesthetic play. Understanding aestheticized is also understanding reimagined in ways more consonant with the creative ingenuity of our actual cognitive efforts.

What must go unfulfilled, however, by the merger of the aesthetic and the cognitive into an interpretive understanding is the desire for aesthetic or cognitive necessity embodied, for example, in Kant's disinterestedness requirement. But this desire is one that Elgin and others invite us to get over – though without needing to give up normativity. Short of certainty, we make do with the best we have: the vast store of agreements we at present have no reason to revise. This wealth of understanding is the legacy of a history of practicing the art of making exemplary sense of things, the art of reflective judgment envisioned, if inadequately, by Kant. The key to fulfilling what Kant sensed under the title “reflective judgment” is to situate within understanding the ‘merely’ reflective judgments that Longuenesse follows Kant in relegating to an aesthetic preserve. Understanding, allowed its creative, metaphorical, interpretive, aesthetic dimensions, grasps a richly meaningful world more complex than a system of concepts, but also makes itself at home in a world without certainties.²⁰

²⁰ Grateful thanks to Catherine Z. Elgin for helpful and improving comments on a draft of this essay.

Unearthing the Wonder

A “Post-Kantian” Paradigm in Kant’s Critique of Judgment

John McCumber

1. SELF-CRITICAL NOTE

There are moments when even the most rarified philosophical texts betray a certain helplessness on the part of their creators – helplessness that is not mere confusion or folly, but a kind of rational desperation occasioned by the authors’ discovery that without their intentions, or even against their will, something foreign and unsought, yet intelligent, is surging into their philosophy.

Hume wrote feelingly of this experience in the Conclusion to Book I of his *Treatise*.¹ Plato, in the *Phaedrus*, made it a condition for philosophy, when the sight of the beloved “knocks” the wandering soul out of itself (*ekplêttontai kai ouketi hautôn gignontai*, 250a7). Aristotle helpfully de-eroticizes Platonic *ekplexia* into *thaumasia*, the “wonder” with which philosophy begins (*Metaphysics* I.2, 982b12). At such moments the philosopher loses dominance and gives way. But to what, other than philosophy itself? Philosophy is not always an intentional production of the human intellect, then. Sometimes it just happens. When it does, if Aristotle is right, it happens as a wonder (*thauma*).

As Daniel Dahlstrom has noted, Kant too writes of *thaumasia* – when, in the Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, he invokes the “quite noticeable pleasure, even wonder” (*Bewunderung*) that we fall into when nature shows us a contingent unification of two or more empirical laws.² To be sure, Kant relates this feeling to empirical research rather

¹ See Hume (1978), 263–74.

² *Critique of Judgment* 187. All references to Kant will be given parenthetically and will be to the volume and page of the Akademie edition. These page numbers are given

than to philosophy; it is occasioned by something one finds rather than something one produces. But this silence regarding the intrusion of wonder into philosophy does not mean that Kant was immune to *thaumasia*. It may show only that he wanted to be.

In this essay, I shall be tracing one way in which I think philosophy happens to Kant in the course of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* – when, taking up the transcendental cudgels against the philosophy-without-standards of *Schwärmerei* and the *Sturm und Drang*, he finds himself articulating a way of doing philosophy that neither appeals to a necessary foundation nor abandons critical principles altogether.

On this “post-Kantian” paradigm, morality is grounded, neither a priori nor in particular experiences, but in the way experiences can fit together. The main name I associate with this approach is Hegel, but seeing him in this way means seeing the relation of Hegel to Kant differently than is usually done. To put roughly what I have argued for elsewhere:³ Hegel is not “expanding” the Kantian approach, whether by reintroducing the metaphysics Kant had so effectively demolished, by claiming to know things-in-themselves, or by allowing the transcendental subject somehow to “produce” reality, which could then only be transparent to human reason. Rather, Hegel is *cutting back* the critical philosophy’s pretensions to timeless knowledge to a point where moral ideas such as God and freedom are grounded not in a “supersensible” realm or perspective, but simply as ways in which our experience can be made to cohere. Hegel’s “absolute idealism” is then best understood as a sort of “coherentist empiricism.” Such a wide-ranging set of claims can hardly be justified in a single essay. In this connection I should point out that *thaumasia* happens, not merely to philosophers in general, but to historians of philosophy in particular. The present document expresses the amazement I feel when I contemplate what happened to Kant at the unloving hands of Hegel. It is not an exercise in Kant scholarship. Instead, it aims to show how we can carve up the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and reassemble some of the pieces into a very different picture of philosophy. It is the outcome not of dispassionate investigation, but of a quarter century of obsessive struggle. And that, too, is a wonder of Kant: that even those who disagree with him most strenuously must always aspire to be his pupils.

marginally in Kant (2000). All translations are my own. On *Bewundering* and *thaumasia*, see Dahlstrom (1999), 24.

³ See McCumber (2002) and, more generally, McCumber (1993).

2. WHAT ENLIGHTENMENT ISN'T

Tradition and cliché have it that Kant was the last great ahistorical thinker. But in his influential essay "What Is Enlightenment?" Michel Foucault (1994) showed that Kant in fact had a very astute view of history and of the place of his philosophical labors in it. One thing Kant is not very astute about, on Foucault's reading, is defining his terms: *Aufklärung* itself is defined, says Foucault, *d'une façon presque entièrement négative, comme une Ausgang, une "sortie," une "issue."*⁴ These characterizations are not only negative but metaphorical; perhaps, however, we need not leave matters there. Unmentioned by Foucault are the teleological and aesthetic categories that run through Kant's essay (published in 1783, seven years before the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*). Could attention to them yield a more positive account of enlightenment? Teleology's countercategory, mechanism, certainly finds a place in the essay, for statutes and formulas, the "hobbles of immature reason," are explicitly identified as "mechanical" (VIII:36).⁵ Unenlightened society itself is "mechanical" in that some of its members must be kept in a passive condition, as mere parts of a machine (VIII: 37). If what we might call 'unenlightenment' is mechanical in this way, then we might go on to suspect that enlightenment for Kant is teleological, a process with a goal.

But in fact, not even the unenlightened society is a mere mechanism, for the "public" has influence on its leaders: It forces them to do its thinking for it, since its members cannot think for themselves (VIII:36). At once cause and effect of itself in this way, the unenlightened public prolongs its own unenlightened state up to a "perpetualizing of absurdities" (*Verewigung der Ungereimtheiten*: VIII:38).⁶

Even the unenlightened individual, therefore, is not merely a passive cog in the machine of state but belongs to two orders at once: She is both

⁴ Foucault (1994), 564.

⁵ These page numbers are given marginally in "What Is Enlightenment?" in Kant (1996), 11–22.

⁶ Though the view that leaders and public reciprocally perpetuate the unenlightened condition of society sounds like Kant's characterization, at *Critique of the Power of Judgment* §64, of an organized being as "cause and effect of itself" (V:370), I think that it would be wrong to conclude that an unenlightened society has a teleological structure or is a "natural purpose." For a natural purpose, or an organized being, has a unity expressible in a concept; an unenlightened society, by contrast, is not unified, since it is composed of active leaders and passive subjects, and the "perpetuation of absurdities" to which it leads is not a concept. The mutual causation of leaders and public seems rather to designate the point in the mechanical equilibrium of an unenlightened society at which a teleological development toward enlightenment can take hold.

a part of the machine and a member of the community (*des gemeinen Wesens*). In her latter capacity she is able to address the public at large, that is, to be a “scholar” (VIII:37). Enlightenment begins when the few independent thinkers who are always around (VIII:36) are able to address the public freely. The increasing independence of the public, as it is educated by these few, leads the government to relax its restrictions on public discourse, which in turn leads to still more independent thinking on the part of more and more members of the public.

Enlightenment, too, becomes a self-perpetuating motion, but in the other direction. This happens when the government comes to see that freedom of public discourse in no way hinders its own legislative activity, that is, its capacity to make the subjects obey (VIII:40, 41). Free thought, beginning with the writings of a few independent thinkers, thus “gradually works back on the common sensibility (*Sinnesart*) of the people . . . and eventually even upon the principles of the government” itself (VIII:41–42). People, public, independent thinkers, and government thus stand in a play of mutual transformations in the course of which humans work themselves up out of their original crudeness (*Rohigkeit*, VIII:41).

Enlightenment is thus a process in which public and government are reciprocal causes of one another; it leads toward a goal (enlightenment itself), and so the “second order” to which the individual belongs is that of society as what Kant will, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, call an “organized being.” Is there enough here for a “positive definition” of enlightenment? Or must we agree with Foucault?

Neither, quite yet. Kant has described the process of enlightenment but not its *telos*, for independent thinking itself has goals – the conclusions of the arguments conducted in it – and Kant refuses to specify what conclusions enlightened discourse will reach. This is not mere prudence on his part but a principled refusal. Kant’s famous interdiction on any generation legislating religious doctrine to future generations holds not merely for that special pressing case but in general:

One epoch cannot bind itself and conspire to place the following one in a condition such that it must become impossible for the later age to extend its cognition (especially in such pressing matters), to cleanse it of errors, and in general to progress further in enlightenment. That would be a crime against human nature, whose original determination lies precisely in such progress. (VIII:39)

While it is not merely mechanical, enlightenment is also not teleological, for it never arrives at a definitive result. Every truth attained through public discourse is susceptible to critique and correction by later thinkers.

Kant has thus described, under the name of enlightenment, a process that has no end, a teleology without *telos*. In the terms of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, for which beauty is “purposiveness without purpose” (V:220), the enlightened society would be not merely organized but beautiful. If enlightenment is its culmination, it seems that history itself must also be beautiful.

In the passage I cited earlier, Foucault suggests that Kant does not define enlightenment other than negatively because he is not interested in a future state, but in the *difference* enlightenment introduces into previously unenlightened society. But Kant is in fact no postmodern acolyte of difference. Enlightenment remains undefined by Kant, not only in the service of human nature and progress (as the preceding quote has it), but on philosophical grounds that the later *Critique of the Power of Judgment* makes quite clear. There is nothing that enlightenment cannot call into question and abandon – even its most basic “principles of government” (those of autonomy and the moral law would surely count as such) are open to criticism and rejection. As an organized but thoroughly fallibilistic process, enlightenment is beautiful rather than teleological in nature – and beauty, being nonconceptual, cannot be defined.

3. A PROBLEM WITH ENLIGHTENMENT

History’s culmination in enlightenment will be specified more closely by the *Critique of Judgment*, §§83–4, where history’s goal turns out to be not merely the free play of enlightened discourse, but the narrower notion of humanity under moral law (one can certainly see oneself as willing to submit all one’s views to criticism, and so as being “enlightened,” without seeing oneself as under the Kantian moral law). Kant’s earlier view that history’s goal is more indeterminate than that was to find its most powerful echo in Schiller’s *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Humanity*:

Does such a state of beautiful semblance really exist? And if so, where is it to be found? . . . One will find it only . . . in some few chosen circles, where conduct is governed, not by some soulless imitation of the customs of others, but one’s own aesthetic nature directs; where humans move with daring simplicity and tranquil innocence through even the most complicated situations and do not need either to injure the freedom of others, in order to maintain their own, or to shed their dignity to show grace.⁷

⁷ Schiller (1983), 218, my translation. Also cf. McCumber (1999).

Enlightenment is here given an explicitly aesthetic dimension, and one that reaches a conclusion even more empty than in Kant's essay – merely acting “as one's aesthetic nature directs,” in “simplicity and tranquil innocence.” From Schiller's point of view, the idea of humanity under moral law is far too specific to be the proper conclusion of the process of enlightenment, and indeed represents a sort of alien intrusion into the purposiveness-without-purpose that constitutes that process.

Humanity under moral law is, of course, central to Kant's whole transcendental-practical standpoint, which as a priori is independent of experience. This leads to a further contrast between his approach and Schiller's. Morality, for Schiller, is not a priori but grows out of aesthetic experience. If we can get moral guidance from aesthetic experience, however, we do not need Kantian appeals to an ethical a priori. Without that ethical motivation, in Schiller's view, the whole Kantian transcendental realm falls. Philosophy (though Schiller does not put it this way) is returned to 1783, when Kant wrote his astute critique of German society without any appeal to an a priori dimension and maintained that even what is (politically) most basic, the very “principles of the government,” is subject to critique and revision in light of further experience.

When we compare “What Is Enlightenment?” with the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* in this perspective, we see that Kant has run into a problem. It can be put as follows. John Zammito has shown that Kant wrote the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* in part to counter some of Schiller's forerunners, in particular Herder and Hamann.⁸ Only a properly grounded philosophy can avoid the *Schwärmerei* Kant finds in the *Sturm und Drang* and related thinkers – the tendency to push thought beyond possible experience without any standards for doing so. Philosophy must be grounded in such standards, and Kant – following almost the entire philosophical tradition – believes that philosophy's grounding must be “absolutely necessary” (IV:xv; also cf. III:xxii–xxiv). As the Schematism tells us, however, to be necessary is to hold for all time (cf. III:184). In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, then, Kant fights off *Schwärmerei* by pursuing a philosophy that is to hold for all time. But is he, the philosopher, not thereby trying to do just what, in “What Is Enlightenment?”, he had forbidden to the clerics – to place limits on the free thought of future generations? If he abandons those limits, however, does he not move to a Schillerian position, abandon the transcendental standpoint, and slip into *Schwärmerei*? Behind this dilemma is the assumption, still

⁸ Zammito (1992), 9–11, 35–44.

current today, that any philosophy that is not timelessly “necessary” is mere *Schwärmerei* in the general sense of enthusiasm without standards. But need it be so? Is Kant, in his zeal to rescue philosophy from the bathwater of *Schwärmerei*, throwing some babies out as well?

I will argue here that in the course of trying to show that aesthetic experience is not to be seen in terms of the enthusiasm of “genius” but as disciplined by taste and so by transcendental principles, Kant finds himself articulating a way of doing philosophy that is neither the undisciplined “expectorations”⁹ of enthusiasts like Hamann nor the crystalline abstractions of the Critical Philosophy. I will focus, though briefly, on four seemingly separate discussions in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*: those of the “ideal of beauty” (§17), of common sense (§§20–22), of “enlarged thought” (§40), and of the “cultivation of reason” (§32).

Kant seems to fight this new philosophy at every step. He refutes or denigrates its main claims. He abruptly terminates discussions that could have clarified aspects of it. He never links the specific insights he is presenting into a new philosophical paradigm. He never even suggests that such a thing can be done. But his intelligence and integrity are so wonderful that he nonetheless articulates basic features of a “post-Kantian” paradigm in exemplary fashion – if we only know where to find them and how to connect them with each other.

4. AESTHETIC STANDARD IDEAS

The first place to look, I think, is Kant’s account of the “aesthetic standard idea” (*ästhetische Normalidee*). This comes up in §17 as part of the third moment of reflective judgment, that of “relation”; the relation involved is that of causality. To summarize much of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* up to that point, we can say that in attributing purposiveness to a thing, we claim that the concept of the thing had a causal role in bringing that thing about. Beautiful objects do not have concepts, for the judgment that a thing is beautiful has a feeling in place of a predicate. Such a judgment therefore does not yield knowledge of its object, and in that sense it is purely subjective. But because the feeling in question is a priori, that is, it is the result purely of the faculties of the individual coming into harmony with one another, it is a feeling that can in principle be shared by all beings who have the same faculties I do – that is, by all human beings.

⁹ As Hegel would call Hamann’s thought. See Hegel, “*Hamanns Schriften*,” in Hegel (1970–1).

The feeling is thus “universally communicable,” though not necessarily universally communicated. If an object arouses this particular feeling, it is beautiful; if it arouses it “among all ages and peoples,” then we are prone to think that it likely creates that feeling for everybody. Some objects are therefore more *exemplary* of beauty than others.¹⁰

Kant’s argument here, as throughout the *Critique of Judgment*, bears against *Schwärmerei*: He is seeking to show that although aesthetic experience is subjective, it is not entirely without standards, standards that we cannot invent at will. The trouble is that, since there is no concept of beauty, it is impossible to say what the standards are by which we judge something to be beautiful. How, then, can some objects be possessed of exemplary beauty? What would such beauty be an example of?

The answer lies in the fact that not all experience of beauty is wholly without concepts. Suppose that we try, as Reason always tries, to formulate the idea of the most beautiful possible thing (V:232). Since beauty cannot be conceptually defined, such an idea must be presented as an intuition, and so is more appropriately called an ‘ideal’ than an ‘idea’.¹¹ Such an intuition, moreover, cannot be an instance of what Kant calls “free beauty,” which is a matter of pure aesthetic (sensory) form and cannot be defined in any way (V:229–31). Since free beauty cannot be defined, a given case of it cannot be compared with anything, and so we could never say of a free beauty that it is the most beautiful possible thing. In order to compare a thing with other things, even with respect to its beauty, we must therefore know its species, which in turn is given through its concept. It follows that the ideal of the most beautiful possible thing will not be given in a purely reflective judgment, but in one that contains an intellectual component (V:233).

The ideal of beauty has two components, the ‘standard idea’ and the ‘ideal’ per se. These come about in different ways. What I will call the ‘aesthetic standard idea’ (*ästhetische Normalidee*) is formed inductively – indeed, automatically or “in a manner wholly beyond our grasp” (V:233–4), similarly to the way computer images are formed today by taking a large number of human faces and “averaging” them together, thus

¹⁰ It is not material to Kant’s argument that there be universal agreement on the beauty of any single object. No object compels everyone to find it beautiful: There will likely always be at least a few who do not. The fact that some objects can raise claims to such beauty suffices to establish the view that some objects are, in my term, more exemplary of beauty than others.

¹¹ For the distinction between an idea and an ideal, see the *Critique of Pure Reason*’s discussion of the “ideal of pure reason” at III:595–9.

producing a perfect, and perfectly bland, “average face.”¹² Thus, says Kant, my mind takes the greatest height I normally perceive for a man, and the smallest, and averages them together to come up with a standard idea of normal male height. This idea is present in my mind as an image, not as a concept, and tells me what men are “supposed” to look like. I can use it as a standard for evaluating people (“he’s rather short,” “he’s awfully tall”). Since the image is a standard for evaluating sensory experience, we can (and do) call objects that resemble it “beautiful.” And an object that approaches particularly closely to this standard idea is exemplary of such beauty.

This sense of beauty is, of course, hardly Kant’s own. Because it is merely an average of all the people we have seen, the standard idea does not provide an archetype of beauty but merely gives us what Rudolf Makkreel calls the “minimal condition” for beauty.¹³ Someone who does not approach it cannot be beautiful, but there is more to human beauty than the standard idea (V:235).

Kant points out (V:234) that the idea of beauty arrived at in this way will be culturally relative. If I grow up in Cameroon or China, my original data of average human appearance will be different than if I grow up in Germany.

The other component of the ideal of beauty is the ideal of beauty itself. The species of a thing, its “form,” is its “inner purpose.” The ideal of beauty must involve the attribution of a thing of such an inner purpose. But the purpose involved here cannot be so determinate that it provides conceptual content, which would take us out of the domain of beauty altogether (V:233). We thus need, for our ideal of beauty, an object whose inner purpose is as close to indeterminate as it can be without ceasing to be a “form” at all. Such a minimally determinate inner purpose, however, is exhibited by a human being. For the nature of a human being is just the generic capacity to adopt specific ends: The human being is the being that can set its own purposes. The capacity to do this is human freedom. Hence, the only species that permits us to form an idea of maximum beauty is the human being. So the ideal of beauty is the representation of a human body as capable of setting its own purposes, that is,

¹² This analogy should not be taken to imply that the formation of an aesthetic standard idea has no a priori component; computers, after all, are programmed by humans. In this case, as Rudolf A. Makkreel points out, the a priori component is the purposiveness inherent in the concept of a species (1990, 114).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 117.

as free.¹⁴ Freedom, for Kant, is not supposed to be given any sensible representation; yet here it seems to gain one. This is possible for Kant because freedom, though not sensible itself, is supposed to have sensible effects (V:175). Some of those effects are on the body of a person who is acting freely – a glint in the eyes, for example, or a certain alert disposition of bodily parts (one thinks of the Moses of Michelangelo). In and of itself, of course, a glint in the eye cannot be a direct manifestation of freedom. Only on the basis of our a priori knowledge of what freedom is can we take it that way (V:235). The ideal of beauty thus has a priori origins.¹⁵

There are two important issues, for my purposes, that Kant does *not* broach here. One concerns the ways aesthetic standard ideas can change. What happens to me if I grow up in Germany and then move to Cameroon? Will my standard idea of human beauty not change? Will it not become more general, enlarged by my richer experience? Kant does not mention this possibility. His concern is merely to sketch “to some extent” the psychological process by which we form aesthetic standard ideas (V:233). He presents that process as automatic and, indeed, as we saw, as unconscious. The transformation of aesthetic standard ideas in light of new experiences is more complex than the simple running together of images that Kant is talking about, and is correspondingly unlikely to be automatic or unconscious.

The second issue that Kant leaves undetermined is linked with this one. It concerns the relation between aesthetic standard ideas and concepts. In accordance with his radically dynamic view of the mind, Kant views concepts as rules – specifically, as rules for subsumption.¹⁶ If I see something that is a rational animal, for example, I am to call that a human

¹⁴ Our capacity to determine our own purposes in accordance with “essential and universal purposes” is, to be sure, not the same thing as determining them in accordance with an a priori moral law; the capacity to set one’s purposes “by reason” (*durch Vernunft*) corresponds, I take it, to the looser conception of the goal of enlightenment presented in “What Is Enlightenment?”.

¹⁵ I leave open here whether what Kant here calls an “expression” (*Ausdruck*, 235) of the moral is what he will in §59 call a “symbol” of it; for an argument that it is, see Johnson (1985), 271–2. The strange insouciance with which Kant speaks, on 235, not merely of symbols but of “expressions of the moral” (*Ausdrücke des Sittlichen*) can be alleviated if we take the “moral” referred here to correspond to the wider sense of the goal of history I have located in “What Is Enlightenment?”. Human freedom so understood includes the capacity, indeed the propensity, to set evil ends for oneself (cf. Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, VI:29–31). It is thus less determinate and more empirical than humanity under moral law.

¹⁶ See the discussion in the A version of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, IV:106.

being; and the concept of human being (“a human being is a rational animal”) is the rule that tells me to do this. The aesthetic standard idea is an image, not a rule; but the characteristics of that image can be given separate formulation, and what they would then formulate would be rules for judging something to be beautiful in its kind. They would thus count as a specification of what that kind is, and so as a formulation of the concept of that kind. Do aesthetic standard ideas play a role in concept formation?

Kant does not tell us. He does tell us that “it is in accordance with this idea that rules for judging (*Beurteilung*) become possible in the first place” (V:234), but as Makkreel points out, there are a couple of problems with this sentence. In the first place, it is ambiguous: It does not tell us whether the aesthetic standard idea *prescribes* rules for judging, as a concept would, or whether they can merely be derived from it. Moreover, the word Kant uses here for ‘judging’ (*Beurteilung*) is obscure; in context, it seems not to refer to deciding whether something is a human being or not, which is what the concept of human being allows us to do, but to be used in a specifically aesthetic context to cover what Makkreel calls “judging whether an empirical figure accords with the archetype used by nature in producing its species”¹⁷

Kant *might* say that the characteristics of an aesthetic standard idea, when formulated explicitly, are not concepts simply because the idea in question here is aesthetic, which for him places it securely in a noncognitive part of the mind (this would square with the apparent contextual meaning of *Beurteilung* noted previously). But suppose that we do not accept the absolute nature of the various distinctions Kant makes among the mind’s faculties. What is to keep us from saying that in fact the standard idea of something yields the concept of that kind of thing? Such a reading would not wholly negate Kant’s main point in classifying aesthetic standard ideas as ‘aesthetic’, for it would not allow us to formulate rules for calling something beautiful in the properly Kantian sense. What we could derive from aesthetic standard ideas so construed are rules for calling something a member of its kind – a house, say, or a swan. This, I take it, is simply a development of the cognitive dimension Kant assigns to accessory beauty (*pulchritudo ahdaerens*). As Kant asserts in §16, such beauty presupposes a concept; since he views aesthetic standard ideas as produced by the “congruence” of images of instances of that concept

¹⁷ Makkreel (1990), 115–16. Later Kant does call it a rule, but in a special sense in which the sculptures of Polyclitus and Myron were called rules (235).

with each other, he does not see that new experiences could change the idea and hence any concept derived from it.

Suppose, now, that we resolve the two issues Kant leaves open by saying that the features of aesthetic standard ideas can indeed be formulated as concepts, and that aesthetic standard ideas can change in light of new experiences. Then we have a picture of concepts evolving in a process that we might call 'development by incongruity'.¹⁸

My earlier question about the German who moves to Cameroon would furnish a case of this, but the process of development-by-incongruity that I have in mind is not restricted to our acquaintance with the concept of humankind. Suppose that you grow up in northern Michigan. One of the first universals you notice is the average size of the enclosures in which people spend a lot of their time, and from this you form a concept of 'house'. But because in northern Michigan all the houses are built of wood, you think that a house is a dwelling made of wood. Then you move to Arizona and discover houses that, incongruously, are made of other materials. You modify your concept of house accordingly.

This happens on a social level too, provoking change not in private concepts but in language itself: For a long time, Europeans legendarily thought that 'white' was part of the definition of 'swan'. When they went to Australia and discovered black swans, they had to change the definition of swan. The same thing happened, of course, and much more horribly, with the concept of 'human being'. Science, at times at least, also works this way. Atomic theory forced us to redefine the traditional view of bodies as 'solids'. Einstein redefined the words 'space', 'time', 'mass', 'energy', and several more.

Taking aesthetic standard ideas to be a resource for formulating rules of subsumption – that is concepts – and adding in the possibility that concepts may be formulated out of experiences that at first seem incongruous, provides a view of conceptual change that contrasts instructively with theories of concept formation in three ways.¹⁹

¹⁸ This sort of thing is usually talked about, of course, in terms of anomalies to generalizations. I am talking of incongruities to concepts in order to retain some of Kant's vocabulary on the issue.

¹⁹ On this, see Stern (1977). In her contribution to this volume, Hannah Ginsborg provides grounds for another reason why Kant would not view his account here as an account of concept formation, which is that concepts, as rules, have a normative dimension. To have a concept is to impute to others the possession of the same concept – the concepts that I have are the ones others ought to have. If aesthetic normal ideas, being merely the results of contingent processes of induction, make no such normative claim, then they and the rules they make possible are very far from being concepts. That Kant held some such view

It is, to begin with, unlikely that we will ever have a general theory of concept formation, for concept formation proceeds very differently in different domains. Religious concepts are formed differently from those in astrophysics, and those in turn are formed very differently from concepts in family law. What we have here is not an overall theory of anything, but at most something that could be formulated as the general form for a number of theories of concept formation in specific fields.

Second, what we actually have here is an account of conceptual *reformation* rather than formation: I must already have acquired such concepts as house and human being in order to be able to revise and enrich those concepts in the light of later experience. Kant is thus right to say that the process “presupposes” concepts; he is not right if he is suggesting that it presupposes them *in their final form*.

Third, this is not an empirical account. Kant refers to his account of the formation of aesthetic standard ideas as a “psychological” one and to the process itself as one that “does not reach consciousness” (V:234). When we introduce the possibility that later experiences of a kind may in various ways be incongruent with earlier experiences of it, the process becomes normative. Even after moving to Arizona, I am free to maintain that a house is a dwelling made of wood and to deny that hogans and adobes are houses. True, such a move would be arbitrary; but avoiding arbitrariness is a matter of norms, not of facts or unconscious processes.

So Kant has given us resources for an account of how concepts are *rationally revised* in the light of new experience. This is hardly apparent from his discussion of the ideal of beauty, which remains securely confined within his architectonic, as an account merely of one implication of the third moment of reflective judgment. It is also not evident from his discussion of the formation of aesthetic standard ideas, which is limited to such formation as an unconscious process triggered by perceived similarities. He further obscures the broad importance of what he has said by restricting his discussion to human beings – a point that has to do with the ideal of beauty – *before* discussion of the aesthetic standard idea – as if that idea also had to do only with human beings rather than with beings generally.

of conceptual normativity seems likely; but I am not sure he would be right in maintaining that we do impute to others that they should have the same concepts we do, as opposed to simply assuming that they do have them. Nor am I sure that aesthetic normal ideas do not lead to such imputations. In any case, Kant’s account of the production of aesthetic standard ideas has much richer resources for topics concerning conceptual change than he himself explicitly recognizes, and that is my main point here.

There is, finally, a problem with the ideal of beauty itself. Why, unless we are Kant, do we need to say that the sensible characteristics that manifest freedom are the manifestations of some noumenon that can never appear? Why not take it that they *are* specific aspects of freedom itself: that ‘freedom’ is just a general term for ways in which people appear or behave? Then freedom is neither something in experience nor an idea that I must form of something beyond it, but merely one of the ways in which experiences can be seen to cohere, as when my hands, stance, and eyes together take on a certain form – or as when I speak my mind, attend a religious service, and so on.

When we adopt the very un-Kantian premises that aesthetic standard ideas can be expressed as concepts and that moral ideas need not be distinguished from their effects, that is, can be merely ways in which experiences cohere, we can broaden Kant’s account of aesthetic standard ideas into a more general account of conceptual revision, which in turn can also offer a basis for an account of the origin of such moral concepts as that of freedom.

Moreover, this last un-Kantian move solves – or dodges – one of the major problems in Kantianism. For the view that we are free in *this* sense in no way contradicts the idea that we are determined. Freedom on this view may just be one highly complex way of being determined. Kant’s argument, in the Antinomies of Pure Reason (III:473–52), that “all events have causes” and “we are free” together express a contradiction requiring the postulation of a noumenal realm to resolve it, would thus be unnecessary.

5. WORDS IN SITUATIONS: ‘COMMON SENSE’

While the topic of aesthetic standard ideas has, as Makkreel notes, been largely overlooked in literature on Kant,²⁰ that of common sense has been central to shelves of it. Fortunately, my purposes here do not require discussion of its several mysteries. Basically, there is a special kind of

²⁰ Makkreel (1990), 114. Zammito furnishes an instance of this: “The idea of an aesthetic normal idea, while interesting, only offers a different language to formulate what Kant had explicated more clearly in relating the judgment of taste to the harmony of the faculties. It does not at all advance our understanding of how the judgment of taste may be extended to more complex objects . . . and therefore does not advance our understanding of *pulchritudo adhaerens* as an aesthetic matter” (Zammito 1992, 128–9). Allison follows Zammito: §17 “does not add anything of decisive significance” to Kant’s theory of taste (Allison 2001, 143).

universality to a judgment of taste, a “reduced” kind of universality in which I *impute* to everyone else agreement with my own judgments (V:237). Some of my judgments are not universal at all: I do not impute to everyone my taste for Rocky Road ice cream. Other judgments have “apodeictic” universality that can be proved: I do not have to ask people whether they assent to the Pythagorean theorem for Euclidean space, for example, because proofs for it exist with respect to such space. If others reject it, they are delusional, and I know this without asking them – it follows from the fact that the theorem is a mathematical truth. But if I want to find out whether others agree with a given judgment of taste, I have to go and ask them. And I know perfectly well that some of them will *disagree*. So what I tell myself is that *if they had seen the object as I have seen it*, they would and should agree that it is beautiful. This is the presupposition of ‘common sense’.

This presupposition can be applied to our use of concepts. The process of conceptual revision I described earlier derives concepts from idealized images, which themselves are formed from experiencing things. Since any thing has a variety of properties, concepts formed this way are formed in networks: My aesthetic standard idea of human being includes not just one particular height, but features such as color and weight. This means that when a situation is of any complexity at all, there are usually a variety of ways to describe it (just as we can describe a human being in terms of her coloring, height, etc.). Some of those ways, but rarely all of them, may “click” for me on a given occasion – this is often called the ‘aha’ experience. And ‘aha’ experiences are often *communal*. When Nixon was president, the whole country – except for a few diehards – had, at somewhat different times to be sure, the experience of realizing that the word ‘crook’ actually applied to him (for many people this experience came when Nixon said publicly, “I am not a crook”).

How did people “verify” that Nixon was a crook? Settling on this particular description of him required, after all, a lot of rational activity, not to mention soulsearching. What validated it? Not just the facts in the case, which Nixon could explain away, but also not merely the subjective certainties of a number of individuals. The “click” was validated by soul-searching and rational evaluation on the part of individuals, to be sure; but another important part of it was the fact that everyone else was reaching the same conclusion at around the same time. The final click was thus “intuitive,” a feeling, but it was partly validated by consensus: by the knowledge that many others were agreeing with it, knowledge that came not by talking with them, but by presupposing their common sense.

Such common sense agreement, as Kant argues, does not yield truth: It yields only, we may say, a socially acceptable way of thinking about something. Such an agreed-upon click is best described, perhaps, as a decision, not on the truth of one description as opposed to the falsity of the rest, but on which description is the best available. The presupposition of common sense tells us that such a decision can be made together by an entire community. It then has a sort of *performative* force: When the entire United States decided that Richard Nixon was a crook, pronounced him a crook, he became a crook – not in the sense that he was known to have committed criminal acts (he was never tried for any, and so must be presumed innocent), but in the weaker sense that ‘crook’ – swindler, untrustworthy – became, by common agreement, the best available description of him.

6. ENLARGED THOUGHT

We can connect the two previous discussions by saying that concept formation, as an empirical process, leaves us with a variety of ways to describe almost any situation. One criterion for choosing among the various possible descriptions – a “natural” one – would be that many others in our community are also choosing it. More “philosophically,” we can sort out just what each description commits us to, intellectually and practically.

The “communal intuitive click” of common sense need not, however, be the only way in which we come to agreement about the best way to describe a situation. In §40, Kant talks about a *procedure* for thinking, which he calls “enlarged thought”. In enlarged thought, we take the views of others into account in formulating our own. This does not give us truth – any more than communal accord can give us truth. What it does do, Kant says, is correct for “the limitations which happen to attach to our own judging” (V:294).

We have, according to Kant, a recurrent tendency to mistake conditions that hold for our own thinking for conditions imposed by reality itself – indeed, his whole philosophy can be read as a battle against that tendency. Sometimes what we mistake for objective truths are merely contingencies of our own way of thinking that come from our limited experience. Taking into account the views of others via enlarged thought thus helps us to “escape the illusion that arises from the ease of mistaking subjective and private conditions for objective ones, an illusion that would have a prejudicial effect on the judgment” (V:293).

The way to do that is this: If we have a common sense, that means we have a shared approach to judging things; we can see things in the

same way and come to agreement about them. Comparing *my* views with *yours* develops this shared ability. It helps both of us make clear that we have really perceived the thing or situation correctly and described or understood it adequately. The “communal click” does not have to be intuitive, then; it can be produced via dialogue with others. Such dialogue, for Kant, need not be actual. I can *imagine* what others think and take their views into account in formulating my own (cf. V:295). Common sense, as an a priori power of the mind, enables us to imagine all the *possible* views of others.

The “post-Kantian” approach that is shaping up will not leave enlarged thought to the imagination, for without some sort of transcendental grounding the scope of my imaginative power is in doubt. There are doubtless views out there, on many subjects, that I cannot even imagine.²¹ Hence this approach will undertake a comprehensive inventory of all the views on a given subject that have actually been held and will attempt to measure them, not so much against the facts – when those are available, that is the job of those who hold the views in question – but against each other, testing them for such characteristics mentioned by Kant here as autonomy and consistency. (Do the views really stem from rational considerations? Or from social or economic interests?)

As a development of common sense, enlarged thought can take us out of our community – the community of people who have had experiences like ours and who have therefore ended up with concepts like ours. We can engage in dialogue with people from other cultures and with texts from ancient times.

7. THE CULTIVATION OF REASON

Such common sense agreement, however, even when attained via enlarged thought, would have to be ratified by the individual. In §32, Kant uses the example of a young poet who has written a poem, which everyone else tells her is simply awful. Until she sees that for herself, she cannot agree. But she cannot rely *exclusively* on her own judgment. She needs the corrective judgment of others in order to progress as a poet.

²¹ If we accept Makkreel’s hermeneutical account as Kant’s, the enlargement of thought applies both to my thought and to that of the person I am trying to understand: “we project a possible intermediate position held neither by the self nor by the other” (Makkreel 1990, 160). Though imagination clearly has a role in such dialogue, it can hardly take it over entirely, as Kant suggests; in order to come up with a position intermediate between Plato’s and my own, I must at least be exposed to Plato’s.

In this connection, Kant here in §32 makes an important point:

The same holds for all uses, no matter how free, of our powers, including even Reason. . . . If each subject always had to start from nothing but the crude predisposition given him by nature, [many of] his attempts would fail, if other people before him had not failed in theirs; they did not make those attempts in order to turn their successors into mere imitators [i.e., to deprive them of their autonomy], but so that, by their procedure, they might put others on a track whereby they could search for the principles within themselves and so adopt their own and often better course. (V:283)

We should not *imitate* the past; but we are always *following* it.

Three points lie behind this. The first is the familiar Kantian point that our faculties have principles: There are right and wrong ways to use them. The second is that we do not know from birth what those principles are: We are born with our faculties, but not knowing how to use them. In order to learn how to use them, we must rely on the trial and error of previous generations – on history. Hence the third point: Our faculties have *histories*.²²

Kant's view of enlightenment inserts his own work into a history of the human faculties. The propositions of the Critical Philosophy are not empirically true descriptions of how the mind actually functions. All around Kant, people – even exceptionally intelligent ones – are misusing their faculties. They are trying, for example, to deduce a priori truths from sensibility rather than the understanding, as Locke tried; or trying to use reason to acquire truths about the world, as Leibniz (and many other philosophers) tried; or mistaking the “technical practical” for the truly moral (as §I of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* notes). Kant's critical procedures are designed to map out, for the first time, the *proper* use of the faculties: His philosophy is normative through and through.²³

The transcendental norms of the faculties – their basic “settings” – do not themselves change with time. One example of this is the logical principle of the faculty of Reason. Insofar as it merely concerns correct inference (and does not relate us directly to objects of any sort), Reason

²² This learning how to use our faculties goes beyond the cultivation of moral feeling and of taste; it is what Salim Kemal calls “progressive culture” and includes teaching us how to set purposes morally, that is, how to treat others as ends and not as means (Kemal 1997, 120). Kant's quote here suggests that it goes beyond even that; I would put it that for Kant, one way we can learn what an end-in-itself is by learning how to treat people as if they were such. My earlier “post-Kantian” suggestion that moral ideas do not need to be distinguished from their effects would enable going even further: What it is to be an end in oneself *is* being treated as such by other people and oneself.

²³ Cf. Deleuze (1990), 26–7.

seeks to reduce the many rules, or concepts, of the Understanding to the fewest possible higher ones. Its “principle,” then, is “manifoldness of rules and unity of principles.”²⁴ When the rules in question are conditions, Reason will seek the greatest unity of the totality of conditions for a thing; and that unity constitutes an “object” to which Reason relates in its transcendental employment. Since that object includes all the conditions for a given thing, it cannot itself have a further condition, and so it is unconditioned. But nothing empirical is unconditioned, so the transcendental objects of reason are the famous Kantian noumena. The “principle of reason” is not merely for Kant not itself in time – it is what leads us out of time, into the timeless world of noumena.

But what if no firm distinction is to be drawn between the principles of a faculty and the ways we actually use it? Then we would confront a dilemma. Either the ways we use our faculties do not change with time, in which case everything Kant has said about the culture of reason is wrong; or even the basic principles of the faculties, and so the faculties themselves, would arise from the historical process of trial and error that Kant has described. In the latter case, which is the more plausible, the human mind would be historical through and through – there would be nothing in it over and above the results of history. History would be where we got our faculties.

This would mean that even reason and the understanding had come to be from something else – either from a different thing or from a different, earlier state of the same thing. And it would mean that they are not “necessary” in Kant’s sense: They can change into other things or into different states of themselves.

What sort of status could the basic principle of a faculty then have? Only that of any other empirical maxim or concept: that it has been tried and refined over an historical process, and must serve until something better comes along. Such an empirical justification, however, will not allow us to extend the use of a principle even to the limits of possible experience, much less beyond them. For example, in the case of the principles (or pure concepts) of the understanding we could say, “all events up to now have had causes,” but not that all events whatsoever *must* have causes (not a bad restriction, given such “post-Kantian” phenomena as proton decay). Kantian necessity, as truth for all time, vanishes.

This in turn bears on the “principle of reason,” for it means that we cannot concoct conditions (*conditiones non fingo*). The “totality of conditions”

²⁴ III, 362; the overall discussion of Reason as a faculty is at III:355–66.

for x is simply all the conditions we know about for x . While we may very strongly suspect that there are others (and on impeccable inductive grounds, as when we strongly suspect that the water that has frozen does not contain salt), we cannot *know* it. Reason thus loses its pull to the unconditioned: The “manifoldness of rules” that it seeks is merely the greatest number of known conditions of a thing – or the greatest number of currently available concepts. Reason then ceases to strive for what the human mind cannot have and contents itself with ordering what it already has. It becomes a housekeeper for empirical concepts.²⁵ It tells us to bring our concepts into the most parsimonious definitional system possible: ideally, one in which they would all be defined in terms of one Ur-concept. The more concepts we can do this with, the more “Reasonable” our effort.

8. A “POST-KANTIAN” PARADIGM

These four discussions – concerning (1) aesthetic standard ideas, (2) common sense, (3) enlarged thought, and (4) the cultivation of reason – thus have, in my “post-Kantian” version of them, strong interconnections. (1) describes a process by which an individual mind equips itself with well-formed concepts; (2) and (3) describe how it applies and enlarges those concepts in community; and (4) extends all this to the level of the history of the entire human species. In the course of this, we have seen three cases where Kant – unintentionally or, perhaps, in spite of himself – shows us how to put into time and experience things that he himself maintains are exempt from it. (1) Moral ideas, such as freedom, can be derived by taking a coherent set of experiences, such as a disposition of bodily parts, and giving it the name ‘freedom’. The distinction between noumena and phenomena is thus not needed; the problems about the causality of reason, as Kant has stated them, fall away: (2) Descriptions of situations need not be validated within the individual mind as propositions that are true or false for all time, but can be rationally accepted by the individual as someone who now agrees with her community about the best way to describe something. And (3) the faculties themselves have origins in time – that is, in history.

My sketch of the new paradigm can now be completed (though, to be sure, competed only as a *sketch*). It has both historical and systematic sides. On the historical side, it views our words as having developed over time,

²⁵ Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason* III, 362.

like Kant's aesthetic standard ideas. It investigates them to see whether they are, so to speak, tried and true, that is, it examines their histories to see if those histories can be reconstructed so as to exhibit a gradual testing-and-refining process resulting in the word as we have it today.

On the systematic side, it organizes the words that survive this examination via a version of Kant's principle of reason, resulting in a system in which they are all defined by the fewest number possible of "basic words." This enables us to see, in a given case, just how each word relates to its competitors: what it commits us to, for example, to describe something as a 'cause' rather than as a 'ground', 'condition', 'occasion', 'agent', and so on.

The aim of this is nothing so grand as truth, but only the chance for a fallible communal agreement on which way of describing a situation is currently the best available – "best" in terms of both its relative accuracy to the facts and its promise of making things better. This kind of philosophy is obviously not mere *Schwärmerei*; but neither, and equally obviously, is it Kant. As I have argued elsewhere, it is Hegel.²⁶ To state the main correspondences very crudely: Conceptual "growth by incongruity" is the recurrent development from certainty through experience to truth presented in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*; the account of basic words demanded by common sense is furnished by Hegel's System itself (with 'being' as the "Ur-concept"); the agreement produced by the actual exercise of enlarged thought has the basic structure of Hegelian Reconciliation; and the historical development of the faculties is the self-mediation of Spirit – nothing less than freedom itself, for Hegel.

9. THE PRICES

There are prices to be paid for adopting the "post-Kantian" approach I have sketched. At every turn, it rejects the view that anything knowable *or thinkable* by us can be treated as in any way atemporal. It takes everything as having come to be from something else and as destined to pass over into something else; the notion of autonomy, for example, must be given an historical grounding in the development of modernity (as one stage in the self-mediation of Spirit). The notion of necessary truth, so dear to millennia of philosophers, is thus excised from philosophy. This should be clear from the "un-Kantian" views to which I appealed in the previous four discussions. Those were (a) the denial of a basic distinction between aesthetic and cognitive categories, which allowed the aesthetic standard

²⁶ See McCumber (1993), *passim*.

idea to give rise to concepts; (b) the assimilation of moral ideals to their effects, which allowed us (for example) to call certain coherent ways of behaving by the name of ‘freedom’; (c) the view that imagination, not being transcendently grounded, cannot carry out the dialogue of enlarged thought, which must therefore be a real dialogue; and (d) the rejection of a firm distinction between the operations of a faculty and the principles governing those operations. In each case, the claim of something to be atemporal – be it a faculty or its principle, the grounding of something in such a faculty or principle, or a moral idea – is simply dropped.

The view that nothing is valid for all time is hardly Kant’s. There is Kantian warrant for it, however, since Kant held that all our knowledge is in time (as the form of both inner and outer appearances). Even if there are eternal or necessary truths, our knowledge of them changes over time. Whatever is eternal about some object of our knowledge must therefore be set off from our knowledge of that thing – that is, it must, in Kant’s terminology, be a “thing-in-itself.” Even if the Pythagorean theorem has an eternal core, we cannot say what it is. Every predicate we apply to the theorem may turn out to have been wrongly applied; it may turn out not to be about triangles at all (it certainly is not about space in general). Philosophy is thus not so much “naturalized” as temporalized and thereby fallibilized – as Kant’s doctrine of the faculties, which all of my “un-Kantian” presuppositions in one way or another deny, has turned out to be distinctly fallible. If abandoning Kant’s account of the human mind as consisting of ahistorical, principle-governed faculties is the only price we must pay for connecting certain fragments of the *Critique of Judgment* into a new philosophical approach, it may not be thought a heavy one. But two other prices are revealed by Kant in §§82–4.

The question in these sections is whether the whole of nature can be considered to have a single final end. We must see nature this way if we are to be able to make use of reflective judgment in the search for natural laws, for that search presupposes that nature not only contains various final causes but is constituted as a unified system of such causes; such teleological unity can only consist, it appears, in having a single final cause.²⁷ We must give nature a single final purpose, then, and here there

²⁷ See Nussbaum (1996), 278. Allison, passing over the cognitive motivation for positing a single end to nature, derives it instead from the status of human beings as capable of setting their own purposes, which makes Kant’s argument circular: That nature has a single end both follows from and establishes that humans, in virtue of their capacity to set their own purposes, can serve as the single end to nature (Allison 2001, 210–11). If Kant’s argument really exhibits such circularity, then it seems that he calls in

are two ways to go. One is to say (V:426) that *we* are the final purpose of nature: Herbivores are eaten by predators, who in turn are put to many uses by humans. Only humanity can be posited as the final cause of nature, for the human being is “the only being on earth who can form a concept of purposes and use its reason to turn an aggregate of purposively structured things into a system of purposes” (V:427). But human beings as such cannot be thought of as the ultimate purpose of nature. The problem is empirical: Nature makes use of us, too. By killing predators we reduce their numbers, which makes the balance of nature, not us, the final cause of nature. Our bodies fertilize the world after our death, as does any organic matter. In fact, nature treats us like any living beings: Rocks fall on us and crush us, hurricanes blow us away, and microbes attack us. So, like other living beings, we are as much means as ends. Hence the following dilemma:

An ultimate purpose of nature is certainly required for such a system to be possible, and we cannot posit it anywhere but in man. But man too is one of the many animal species, and nature has in no way exempted him from its destructive forces any more than from its productive forces, but has subjected everything to natural mechanism without a purpose. (V:§427)

The first step in obviating the empirical problem is to view not humans, but something *in* humans as the final cause of nature. As §83 goes on to argue, there are two candidates for this: our happiness and our moral goodness.

But human happiness cannot be coherently posited as the ultimate cause of nature. One problem is conceptual: Happiness for Kant just means the satisfaction of all desires, and so is an inherently changing and indefinable concept – the nature of happiness depends on what desires you have, and that changes from moment to moment. Hence,

even if [nature] were subjected completely to man’s choice, [it] still could not possibly adopt a definite and fixed universal law that would keep it in harmony with that wavering concept. (V:430)

Even if the empirical problem were solved, in other words, we could not coherently posit human happiness as the final cause of nature. For nature as such, in Kant’s view, is the “law-governedness of appearances in space and time” (III:165). A nature that does not operate according to a

the unconditionality of the final cause of nature in order to make his argument that humanity under moral laws must be viewed as nature’s final end – which would support my argument that his general argument fails.

“definite and fixed law” would be able to serve human happiness only by a series of continual ad hoc adjustments of its causal chains, and would not properly be a law-governed “nature” at all.

Moreover, this does not solve the empirical problem. Not only does nature in general have no regard for our happiness, but our human nature causes us much misery – wars, oppression, and so on: “man himself does all he can to work for the destruction of his own species” (V:430). In sum, “in the chain of natural purposes man is never more than a link” (V:431); the final purpose of nature cannot be human happiness, which means that the final purpose of nature cannot be found in nature at all. What else is there in us, over and above what nature can deal with? The answer, for Kant, is our capacity to set our own purposes, that is, to act freely. This is a “formal and subjective” condition, and to view it as the final cause of nature means postulating that we can use nature as a means for freely setting our own purposes. The way we do this is “culture.” So, within nature, the expression of the final purpose of nature is human culture.²⁸ But as §84 points out, if the ability of humans freely to set their own purposes is unconditioned, it is not itself something empirical; it can never be realized. It is, rather, a noumenon, for it is nothing other than freedom. This is the final, non-natural purpose of nature, then: The noumenal realm is the final cause of the natural realm.²⁹

There are, then, two further prices we must pay for abandoning the atemporal realm. One is that science would no longer be justified in using the maxims of reflective judgment to gain knowledge of natural laws. It is open to doubt, of course, whether science really does use them in the way that Kant requires. Scientists may, for example, be motivated to bring their results under as few natural laws as possible by a bureaucratic imperative:

²⁸ Culture so considered corresponds, I take it, to the relatively indeterminate goal of enlightenment in “What Is Enlightenment?”. Kant here (V:431) fills in a gap that Paul Guyer points out in the argument at V:426–7, which does not say *why* the final purpose of nature as expressed within nature must be a being capable of setting its own ends. Guyer rightly sees that the justification lies in the centrality of human beings to this stage of Kant’s philosophy; but the point is more than the mere “reminder” he takes it to be. Seen in light of V:431, the argument is disjunctive: There are only two things in us that can be the natural expression of a final purpose of nature, happiness and the ability to set purposes; it cannot be happiness; therefore, it must be the ability to set purposes (Guyer 2000a, 38).

²⁹ Kant’s argument here has been credited by Paul Guyer (2002a) with “astounding temerity.” I can only agree. Charles Nussbaum has noted that “not everyone will be prepared to grant that ‘the unconditioned’ is an unavoidable requirement of theoretical and practical rationality” (1996, 278). Again, I agree – for I am not prepared to grant it.

to present their results in as organized a way as possible so that others may have access to them. The Cold War's replacement of Great Science by government-and-industry-funded Big Science renders it unlikely in any case that scientists will seek any kind of larger organization in nature, as opposed to uncovering heaps of useful and lucrative truths.

The remaining price, however, is heavy indeed: We must abandon any attempt to think of ourselves as more than natural beings. In particular, we cannot view ourselves as the final causes of nature; we are merely links in the natural causal chain, with respect to which our most beneficent function is to maintain the various balances of nature. I am willing to pay even this heavy price. For I take the principle that there are for us no immutable truths to be, not itself an immutable truth, but an indispensable counsel of philosophical prudence: Too many "timeless truths" have turned out to be false for me to have any confidence whatsoever in Kant's version. The "post-Kantian" paradigm that emerges from Kant's isolated and fragmentary discussions in the *Critique of Judgment* sounds strange indeed. Certainly it looks strange in the most thoroughgoing attempt yet made to carry it out, which, as I have mentioned, is the philosophy of Hegel. He, and the myriad philosophers who in his wake have thought historically – Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Derrida, Foucault – are then neither Kantian nor anti-Kantian. They are not even really post-Kantian, for the basic elements of their approach can be found scattered throughout the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.³⁰ They are fragments of the wonder of Kant.

³⁰ Hence the quotation marks around "post-Kantian" throughout this essay.

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